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**The Illusory Threat  
Enemy Aliens in Britain during the Great War**

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**THE ILLUSORY THREAT:  
ENEMY ALIENS IN BRITAIN DURING THE GREAT  
WAR**

**Martin John Farrar  
PhD Degree**

## **Abstract**

In 1914 there were around 53,000 Germans immigrants living in Britain, yet by the end of the Great War, there were only 22,000 left. During the war the British government spent a lot of time and effort producing legislation directly aimed at protecting domestic security and against enemy aliens.

This thesis understands and explores the methodology and workings of the infant intelligence community and places the use of intelligence and work of the Secret Service Bureau at the centre of the governmental decision making process in relation to the enemy alien question during the First World War.

By assessing the intelligence available on enemy aliens at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the thesis seeks to understand what the real issues were and why decisions were made with regards to internment and repatriation legislation in the Great War. It arises that the British government had a co-ordinated enemy alien policy, which was not borne out of a reaction to press and public pressure for change.

Chapter one focuses on pre-war; developments that facilitated the British government's adoption of the premise that enemy aliens were a potential domestic security threat to the home front in the event of a war with Germany. These developments were the birth of the Secret Service Bureau and the activity surrounding the compilation of the unofficial register of aliens. Chapters two and three examine the role of the Secret Service Bureau in relation to the enemy alien question and the Bureau's influence with other government departments during the First World War. Chapter four considers the Secret Service Bureau's role in developing enemy alien legislation between 1909 and 1918. Finally Chapter five considers the patterns and impact of press and public pressure on the British government's alien enemy policy.

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## **Abbreviations**

ARO Alien Restriction Orders

CID Committee of Imperial Defence

CIGS Chief of the Imperial General Staff

CSO Central Special Office (Egypt)

DMI Director of Military Intelligence

DMO Director of Military Operations

DORA Defence of the Realm Act

DRR Defence of the Realm Regulations

EMSIB Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau

GPO General Post Office

MI5 Security Service / Secret Service Bureau

MI5A Security Service, Alien War Service

MI5D Security Service, Imperial Overseas Special Intelligence

MI5E Security Service, Control of Ports & Frontiers

MI5F Security Service, Prevention of Espionage

MI5G Security Service, Investigation of Espionage

MI5H Security Service, Central Registry of Information/ Organisations & Administration

MI6 Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)

MO5g Military Operations (Special)

NID Naval Intelligence Department

SIB Special Intelligence Bureau

SSB Secret Service Bureau/ Security Service



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Martin Farrar

## **An introduction**

At the outbreak of the war there were around 53,000 Germans living in Britain. Surprisingly the German community was, at the time, the third largest immigrant group in Britain behind the Irish and Jewish communities. By the end of the war, there were only 22,000 German immigrants left in Britain. Enemy alien men of military age had been rounded up during the hostilities, placed in internment camps and then deported at the end of the war. This was irrespective of the threat they posed to British security. Enemy alien women and children fared little better. They were made to register themselves with their local police station, had restrictions placed on their day to day lives and many were deported with their men folk.

During the Great War the British government spent a lot of time and effort producing legislation directly aimed at protecting domestic security. This was achieved by restricting the movement of the German immigrant population at large around the British Isles. The scope of these powers was unprecedented and was based on evidence that suggested the enemy aliens in Britain were a threat to the stability of the country. This thesis will focus on the evidence and intelligence available to the government that justified decisions that were made. It will consider where this evidence and intelligence came from and whether it was reliable.

The goals are to understand the work and role of the Security Service in relation to the enemy alien question during the First World War; to focus upon the infant intelligence community and understand how it built influence across government departments through gathering enemy alien intelligence; and finally to appreciate the Security Service's place at centre of the government's enemy alien decision making and legislation.

Using the archives of the British Counter Intelligence Services, released to the National Archives in 1997, and Secret Service files released under the Freedom of Information Act since 2005, this thesis will chart the development of inter-departmental government activity in the creation of policy for the internment and repatriation of enemy aliens. Assessing the intelligence and how it was used in the creation of enemy alien policy will develop an understanding of how contemporaries actually came to the conclusion that enemy aliens were a domestic security threat to Britain. Finally, this thesis will examine the consequences for such a wartime policy and consider where the

perceived threat from enemy aliens fits in the wider domestic security questions addressed by government during the First World War.

By adding the Security Service intelligence gathering process to the historical studies in this subject area, a contrast can be drawn between the actual threat posed by the German, Austrian and Turkish communities in Britain and the perception that enemy alien policies were nothing more than ethnic cleansing and minority persecution. The focus will link the internal security threat back to the measures undertaken to control enemy aliens within Britain. In turn this will necessitate a reassessment of the role played by the press and public hostility in persuading the government to act over the issue.

It is important to set out, up front, that in the pre-war years and during the Great War various groups associated enemy aliens with spying. The natural definition of a spy is thought of as a secret agent obtaining useful military or naval information of a rival country that could be used by their government. However, the literature and public debates of the period show that there was a much wider definition of what spying might entail. Spies could also be seen as saboteurs, at large and ready to deliberately damage or disrupt the military and economic resources within an enemy country when required. A Home Office letter, in August 1914, on the subject of enemy alien arrests used the widest possible definition: 'Enemy subjects who are reasonably suspected of being in any way dangerous to the safety of the Realm will be arrested by the Police and handed over to the Military authorities.'<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of 'dangerous' is very ambiguous and leads back to the title of this thesis. Throughout the war the illusory threat that enemy aliens posed changed from security, to political to economic to even divisionary, depending on who was who was in control of the illusion and telling the tale.

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<sup>1</sup> TNA: KV 1/65 'Letter from Edward Troup, Home Office, arrest of enemy aliens, 11 August 1914.'

Very few historians have looked at the subject of enemy aliens in Britain during this period, and even those who have tend to include it as a footnote to the wider events on the Western Front. The exceptions to this have been Bird's *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain 1914–1918* and Panayi's studies *Prisoners of Britain* and *The Enemy in Our Midst*.<sup>2</sup> Bird concentrated on the legislative measure taken by the government to reduce the threat to national security from enemy aliens in Britain during wartime. Panayi highlighted the public hostility and 'chauvinistic intolerance' the German community experienced.

Bird's study of the control of the enemy aliens in war time has to be the starting point and key text for this subject area. He rightly points out the neglect of this area of research.

In the vast corpus of scholarship devoted to Great Britain's involvement in the First World War one of the more intriguing issues of domestic policy which has previously attracted little more than cursory attention from historians is the treatment of the small minority of the population (...) who found themselves classified as enemy aliens.<sup>3</sup>

The book provides a firm foundation and detailed introduction to the build-up of government legislation surrounding everything to do with enemy aliens in Britain during the Great War. Bird's book covers everything from emergency measures undertaken before the war, internment policy during the war, enemy aliens in custody, repatriation, restrictions placed on enemy aliens at 'liberty', citizenship, employment, military service and trade issues.

Bird's study is brilliant in narrating 'the evolution and application of policies' by the government against the perceived threat of the enemy aliens at large in Britain, with no stone of detail being left unturned.<sup>4</sup> There can be no piece of enemy aliens control legislation that has not escaped the author's eyes.

However, the context of how this fits into the wider picture of the Great War and what information the decision making process was based on is missing. The legislation surrounding enemy alien control was not created in a vacuum and involved a collection of institutional government department processes, to make recommendations and changes, before reaching Parliament. For example, were the control measures introduced

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<sup>2</sup> J Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain 1914-1918* (London, 1986).

P Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain: German Civilian and Combatant Internees during the First World War* (Manchester, 2012).

P Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War* (Oxford, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Bird, op. cit., p.6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith to the House of Commons in May 1915 a desperate attempt to shore up a weak government and stave off the establishment of a coalition administration? Bird declines to comment beyond detailing the legislation process.

Asquith's coalition government, in May 1915, saw Reginald McKenna replaced at the Home Office by Sir John Simon. Bird comments on the event; 'If McKenna saw himself as a scapegoat for the government's unpopularity over the aliens question he at least had the consolation of being promoted to Chancellor of the Exchequer.'<sup>5</sup> Again, frustratingly, Bird after insinuating the demotion of a Cabinet Minister over the issue of enemy alien control offers no more explanation on the subject.

Here is an opportunity to add an extra dimension to the explanation of how the coalition government came into being. The issue of enemy alien control had been a factor in the government reorganisation and it needs to be recognised as such. No longer can the events of May 1915 be judged simply, as Taylor once did, on the disappointing results experienced on the Western Front at Festubert and Aubers Ridge and in the Dardanelles: 'He [Asquith] settled on coalition with the Conservatives in order to conceal the facts about both shells and the Dardanelles from the British people, another step towards the position that, if men knew the truth about war, they would not go on fighting it.'<sup>6</sup> Turner argues the formation of the coalition government came about because the Liberal Cabinet lost its grip on the direction of war.<sup>7</sup> Turner notes: 'until January 1915 only the spy scare was translated directly into a parliamentary attack on the ministry's competence, and that was limited to the Home Front.'<sup>8</sup> In the autumn of 1914 and the spring of 1915 the remedy for spy scares was for the government to focus upon enemy alien legislation.

Again in 1915, Bird highlights the beginnings of a clash between the Home Office and War Office over enemy alien controls, caused by blurred division of responsibility, but he does not comment any further. It would be interesting to show how this then manifested itself in other areas of government, as it is highly unlikely enemy controls were not a point of dispute in other departments. The government departments involved in making enemy alien legislation work in practice included the Home Office, War Office, Foreign Office, Admiralty, Board of Trade, Ministry of National Service, Post Office,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.92.

<sup>6</sup> A Taylor, *The First World War; An Illustrated History* (London, 1963), p.86.

<sup>7</sup> J Turner, *British Politics and the Great War; Coalition and Conflict 1915-1918* (London, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.57.

Treasury, The Police, Military Intelligence, Colonial Office & India Office, and the Prisoner of War Department. The sheer number was a recipe for inter-departmental conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Bird concludes that alien policies were:

Attempts by essentially moderate politicians to resolve the fundamental dilemma of reconciling the perceived requirements of national security with humanitarian principles in a generally hostile climate of public opinion, and in the face of persistent pressures from parliamentary critics, propagandists and some sections of the press to introduce measures far more repressive than justified by the circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

However, we never really understand the evidence that the decision making process was based on to prove Bird's theories. With this in mind, it is difficult to prove as Bird tried that political expediency came increasingly to dictate policy without investigating material and evidence that the legislation was based on.<sup>11</sup> Bird's book is a clinical, detailed study of the law-making process surrounding enemy alien controls, but one that gives his reader much food for thought in the form of unanswered questions.

Panayi's 1991 book *The Enemy in Our Midst* builds on the foundation of Bird's detailed study.<sup>12</sup> He then tries to fill in some of the unanswered questions left by Bird, or what Panayi calls 'insufficiencies'.<sup>13</sup> The main 'insufficiency' highlighted by Panayi is the role that public hostility played in getting the government to act against the enemy aliens in Britain. This he covers in great detail and to great effect.

The book sets the scene by charting the growth of the German community in Britain, before introducing the reader to the widespread nature of anti-Germanism in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Great War. He then focuses his attention on the official reactions and measures put in place against enemy aliens, before detailing the various anti-German reactions and movements in Britain during the First World War.

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<sup>9</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, p.83.

<sup>10</sup> Bird, op. cit., p.343.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>12</sup> Panayi, Professor of European History at De Montfort University, has an interest in the modern history of Europe and Germany and the history of ethnic minorities and is probably the leading historian in the field of minority studies in the periods of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *The Enemy in Our Midst* was followed up with studies in British racial violence, the history of German Immigrants in Britain, and in German civilian Prisoners in the First World War'.

P Panayi (ed), *Racial Violence in Britain, 1840-1950* (London, 1993).

P Panayi, *German Immigrants in Britain During the 19th Century, 1815-1914* (London, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> P Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, p.1.

Panayi goes further than Bird in analysing just how influential public pressure was over the enemy alien issue. He argues: ‘that the government would not have introduced many of its measures against Germans within Britain without the pressure of “public opinion”’.<sup>14</sup> Panayi illustrates this by attempting to show the link between the implementation of the main measures in internment policy and the peaks of Germanophobia in Britain. But again, like Bird before him, Panayi fails to understand the bureaucracy of law-making and that public opinion was just one of many factors influencing enemy alien policy.

As Panayi’s study is so detailed, again it becomes difficult to understand how all this fits into the wider context of the First World War. He also has a tendency to take the minority to be the majority view. In some parts it is as if Panayi has forgotten that Britain was at war with Germany, a total war which went right to the heart of the home front. How should a threatened home front have reacted to the novelty of air raids and death and destruction on its own doorstep? Again, this is all down to understanding internment and enemy alien legislation in the wider context of the First World War.

With a subject area like this, it is important that it is contextualised within the issues of the day during the First World War. Panayi gives a detail account of the numbers of German aliens in Great Britain at the time of the outbreak of war, but does not explain how they relate to the overall population numbers. The population of Great Britain in 1914 was 45,400,000 and the number of German aliens was 53,000. That is less than 0.1% of the total population. The reader does not get a feel for how small the number was. Maybe Panayi was missing a trick here, as it would actually strengthen his argument to explain that the unprecedented levels of legislation may not have been in proportion to those it was enacted to affect.<sup>15</sup> Britain had limited resources to fight a war and attention was focused on the enemy alien and internment camps diverted valuable resources from the military effort.

Panayi discusses the anti-German riots and provides illuminating eye-witness accounts, but does not go into any details surrounding the geographical spread of the rioting across Britain. Neither, does he go into any detail when focusing on the various

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<sup>14</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, p.3.

<sup>15</sup> In a later study Panayi estimates that there was one German for every one thousand inhabitants within the British Isles at the outbreak of war. P Panayi (ed), *German as Minorities During the First World War: A Global Comparative Perspective* (Farnham, 2014), p.7.



anti-German movements and right-wing MPs. Their geographical locations might throw light on their motivations and influences on enemy alien legislation.

Reading Panayi's detailing of the German community's 'destruction under the chauvinistic intolerance which gripped the country in the Great War,' the reader would be forgiven for believing that spy mania and the poor treatment of enemy aliens was a purely British Empire affair.<sup>16</sup> However, John Williams' study of the home fronts of Britain, Germany and France during the Great War helps to balance this view. It would appear that exactly the same reactions to foreigners as occurred in Britain after August 1914 were at work in Germany too.

Suddenly every foreigner seemed to be a sinister enemy agent. In early August German police stations were crowded with aliens, most of them tourists caught by the outbreak of war and arrested as spies. It was said that the possession of a well-cut coat, a well filled wallet and notably a motor-car was enough to ensure immediate imprisonment as a spy.<sup>17</sup>

Although at 5,000 the English immigrant population in Germany at the outbreak of the Great War pales into insignificance when compared with the numbers of German immigrants in Britain, the German government's reaction was the same: a policy of internment.

Englishmen in particular were ill-treated by police and threatened in the street, and many were sent, regardless of age or sex, to the dreaded Spandau fortress. Even if not arrested and interned, hundreds of English teachers in Berlin were left stranded and penniless.<sup>18</sup>

The phenomenon for changing foreign names was not restricted to Britain either. Where many naturalized Germans in Britain quickly adopted English names (including the 'so called' British royalty), in France, Parisian street names with German origins were replaced and in Germany hotels with English titles were hurriedly renamed. Williams points out: 'The movement went furthest in Germany, where the Berlin police chief, von Jagow, ordered the elimination of all foreign names and words.'<sup>19</sup> By looking outside the British Isles during the First World War, Williams highlights that the treatment and control of enemy aliens was not solely a British problem, as the reader might be led to believe if going by Panayi's account alone.

Understanding how the German immigrant community was treated in the First World War, together with the type of hostilities experienced and the groups who inflicted

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<sup>16</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, p.1.

<sup>17</sup> J Williams, *The Home Front: Britain, France and Germany 1914-1918* (London, 1972), p.20.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.22.

this hostility does not help us understand how Britain got to the point of uncontrolled fear and hostility in the first place. Panayi does not examine what was fuelling the hostility and fear and why sections of the British public were so keen to believe in the information put before them regarding enemy aliens. Can internment in Britain really be attributed to a ‘policy of ethnic cleansing which eliminated the German community’? <sup>20</sup>

What both Bird’s and Panayi’s studies confirm is that the concentration camp really came into its own during the First World War. While those states who captured soldiers might incarcerate hundreds of thousands of such individuals in prisoner of war camps, their internment camps also played a role in punishing civilians, whether in Europe or beyond, because of their nationality.

The centenary of the outbreak of the war in 2014 has brought the subject of enemy aliens back to the mainstream First World War history after years of neglect. Two edited volumes in particular have focused attention on the subject of civilian minorities in war: Panayi’s *Germans as Minorities during the First World War* and chapters in Winter’s *Cambridge History of the First World War*.<sup>21</sup>

Panayi brings together a collection of essays and case studies from leading contributors that examine the treatment of German communities around the world. These cases studies allow the reader to compare how German communities were established and integrated around the world. Then the reader can contrast their treatment when war broke out as these communities were labelled ‘enemy aliens’ and subject to differing government restrictions. The case studies range from the experience of German women in Britain and male internees on the Isle of Man, to German immigrant communities in Belgium, Italy, Russia, the Americas, South Africa, British East Africa and New Zealand.

The recent three volume Cambridge history of the First World War includes a section on ‘Populations at risk.’ This section includes chapters by Panayi on ‘Minorities’ and Annette Becker on ‘Captive Civilians’. <sup>22</sup> Panayi’s chapter concentrates on the Manichaean dichotomies that the state and society create and construct in war, the idea that divides individuals into simple categories such as good and evil, or friend and enemy.

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<sup>20</sup> P Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, p.305.

<sup>21</sup> P Panayi (ed), *Germans as Minorities during the First World War: A Global Comparative Perspective* (Farnham, 2014).

J Winter (ed), *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume III Civil Society* (Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> P Panayi, ‘Minorities’ & A Becker, ‘Captive Civilians’, J Winter (ed), *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume III Civil society*, p.216-241 & 257-281.

He points out that official or public opinion's constructs of what is black and white leads through patriotic fervour to the persecution of minorities such as the ethnic Germans in Britain. Britain was far from the exception and similar outpouring against German ethnic minorities took place in France, Italy and Russia. Panayi regards all governments' internment policies as an extreme measure that would lead to a mainstream policy of ethnic cleansing and in some cases even genocide. However the use of such concepts of ethnic cleansing and genocide are post facto 'historization' and did not exist during World War One. Panayi concludes that ethnic minorities across Europe had the experience of being either persecuted, integrated or exploited during the Great War.

Becker's paper on captive civilians argues that alien enemies were some of the first to be seen as guerrillas or supporters of enemy armies and forced to live in what she terms, 'the age of the concentration camp.'<sup>23</sup> Noting the birth of the concentration camp at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries in Cuba and South Africa, she highlights that with the end of the Great War the familiar sights of internment camps in the landscape and captured civilians were largely marginalised, forgotten. Becker concludes on the concentration camp system: 'We can see these developments as incoherent and often improvised disorder, the consequence of a totalisation process which led to the incarceration of "enemies", whether they were soldiers taken on the battlefield, or civilians, identified and treated like internal enemies, "soldiers without weapons" who had the misfortune to find themselves in the territories overrun or occupied by troops.'<sup>24</sup>

Before the centenary of the outbreak of war there had been a cluster of studies focused on enemy aliens and the Anglo-German relationship in the lead up to hostilities at the beginning of the twenty first century. Van Emden and Humphries use personal testimony in the form of original letters, diaries, photographs, newspapers and government reports to tell the story of life on the home front.<sup>25</sup> One chapter, 'The Enemy Within', uses first-hand accounts from enemy aliens in Britain at the time, and blends them with contemporary anti-alien propaganda from the likes of Horatio Bottomley's *John Bull* magazine and Lord Northcliffe's newspapers.<sup>26</sup> The accounts from the enemy aliens in Britain build up a vivid picture of the hardships and persecution that this section

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<sup>23</sup> Panayi, op. cit., p.257.

<sup>24</sup> Becker, op. cit., p.281.

<sup>25</sup> R Van Emden & S Humphries, *All Quiet on the Home Front* (London, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Lord Northcliffe established *The Daily Mail* (1896) and *The Daily Mirror* (1903), and acquired *The Observer* (1905), *The Times* (1908) and *The Sunday Times* (1908).

of the population suffered during the repeated attacks on them. However the government's response to the enemy alien issue is not covered in any great detail.

Van Emden and Humphries do try to examine the wider picture, looking at the pre-1914 situation with regard to the German community in Britain and also looking forward to the Second World War, during which most immigrants of German origin were able to preserve their liberty in Britain. They ask why the treatment of enemy aliens during the First World War 'was far worse than anything meted out in the Second World War in Britain?'<sup>27</sup> In the end, they put this down to 'a confluence of influences and attitudes peculiar to an island race, which before the war was largely ignorant of other races and cultures.'<sup>28</sup> This conclusion appears particularly odd considering Britain had been an imperial power, with a long history built on internal immigration.

The attitudes peculiar to an island race are dealt with in more detail by Winder who looks at immigration into Britain.<sup>29</sup> He narrates the waves of migration to Britain, from 7000BC to the present day, concluding that we are all immigrants now and that we should question our image of Britishness. He argues that each new wave of foreigners arriving in Britain at first provoked fear and alarm within the country before they became accepted as permanent part of the 'British furniture'.

Although some of his conclusions around 'Britishness' and multiculturalism are rather one-sided against the British people, Winder's study does help us understand how the German community developed in Britain during the two hundred years before the outbreak of the First World War. The German immigrant community in Britain had already been established and accepted as a part of British everyday life. Had it not been for the First World War, there might be a sizable German population in Britain today, with a German butcher or tailor a familiar sight on the British high street. Winder's study puts the enemy alien experience during the First World War into the wider historical context of immigration and highlights how the lessons learnt around internment meant that similar mistakes were not made in the Second World War.

Ramsden's cultural history of the Anglo-German relationship traces the high and low points between Britain and Germany from 1890 to the beginning of the twenty-first century. He charts the rise of British stereotypes of the German nation through the nineteenth century and into the First World War. It is interesting to note that the anti-

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<sup>27</sup> Van Emden & Humphries, op. cit., p.54.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.55.

<sup>29</sup> R Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London, 2004).

German riots of May 1915 were not the first such violent outbursts focused against Germans in Britain. The precedent had been set back in the fifteenth century when Londoners vented their anger against their fellow Anglo-Saxons:

When Londoners rioted against ‘Germans’ in the fifteenth century, they were exhibiting a chauvinistic dislike of foreigners in general and the desire to protect their economic self-interest against privileged aliens (often merchants who bought those privileges by lending money to the King), rather than displaying any particular hostility to Germanness. The attacked ‘Germans’ were as likely to be Dutch or Flemish as residents of the later ‘German’ territory, and Londoners often referred to the same aliens as ‘men of the [Holy Roman] Empire’ or ‘Easterlings’, so uncertain were they of who and what lay to the east of the North Sea.<sup>30</sup>

Of course they were not ‘Germans’ in the sense understood in 1914.

In his chapter, ‘When will Germany Strike? Who Knows? 1890–1914’ Ramsden poses the question whether the German invasion books that caught the public’s imagination in the run up to the First World War changed public policy?

Here it is hard to separate the cultural context from specific military and diplomatic inputs, not least because diplomats and the military read the same books and newspapers as the public. Policy-makers were happy enough to use scares to strengthen their arguments: Esher assured Fisher in 1907 that ‘an invasion scare is the mill of God which grinds you a Navy of Dreadnoughts’.<sup>31</sup>

This chapter also sets out the wider events of the day through the books, newspapers campaigns and theatre productions in which anti-German feeling was framed.

Ramsden’s chapter on the Great War, ‘*When the English Learned to Hate: 1914-18*’ charts how all links with Germany were severed: from dachshunds being stoned in the street, anti-German riots, German measles being renamed Belgian flu and the King’s surname changing to Windsor. Internment and repatriation of German aliens are mentioned in passing, but not considered in any great detail. However Ramsden does acknowledge the destruction of the German community in Britain during the War:

In Edwardian times there had been German communities from Brighton to Dundee, though concentrated in London, where there was a German hospital, a German chapel, and a strong presence at University College; there were also substantial German commercial communities in Manchester and in the textile areas of Yorkshire. This was now all swept away.<sup>32</sup>

In two chapters Ramsden sets the scene for the hysteria and treatment of German enemy aliens in the run up to and during the First World War. There are illuminating stories and

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<sup>30</sup> J Ramsden, *Don’t Mention the War* (London, 2007), p.7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.75.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.96.

well-researched examples in his work, although the book lacks detailed analysis and interpretation of questions that all these gems raised.

All historians who have written on this subject area during the First World War agree that there were three periods of intense activity relating to the treatment of enemy aliens in Britain. The peaks of Germanophobia occurred in October 1914, May 1915 and July 1918 and it was at these times that the Government reacted with measures against enemy aliens in Britain. Most also agree that reaction to and treatment of enemy aliens had its roots in the popular spy and invasion literature of the Victorian and Edwardian eras and was a consequence of the Aliens Act 1905. Winder comments on the passing of the Aliens Act:

It was a fateful day: for the first time, Britain was a club with sharp restrictions on membership. Of course, there had never been a shortage of animosity against foreigners, but here it was translated into, and dignified by, official policy. The legislation might more aptly have been termed the Anti-Aliens Act.<sup>33</sup>

The Aliens Act was a response to demands for restrictions on the large influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. However the act also laid the foundations on which the treatment of enemy aliens during war would be based.

What is more difficult to find agreement on is why this issue is often overlooked in general histories on the First World War. Internment is not mentioned in the Official Histories of the Great War, even though the internment camps were under the control of the War Office and were a drain on the military's resources. While troops were on the streets of Deptford, Southend and Liverpool in May 1915 trying to restore law and order from anti-German mobs and guarding internment camps, they were not available to reinforce the Western Front. Van Emden and Humphries suggest that maybe we have been unable to deal with an 'ugly chapter in British history'.<sup>34</sup> Panayi goes further, suggesting the reason why this theme has never received sufficient attention is because 'the popular view of Germans in the last hundred years is of persecutors rather than persecuted.'<sup>35</sup> Kushner and Cesarani suggest this neglect 'reflects the more general marginalization of immigrant and minority studies within the writing of British history.'<sup>36</sup>

The most likely reason for the lack of an in-depth study of the treatment of enemy aliens is the sheer scale of the First World War and the number of issues wanting attention.

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<sup>33</sup> Winder, op. cit., p.199.

<sup>34</sup> Van Emden & Humphries, op. cit., p.54.

<sup>35</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst* p.1.

<sup>36</sup> D Cesarani & T Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 1993), p.2.

The world had to come to terms with killing on a massive scale, with 3,258,610 men being killed on the Western Front alone.<sup>37</sup> Compared with the treatment of 53,000 enemy aliens in Britain, the military narrative was always going to be studied first as the world looked for answers. It was always going to take time to fully understand the implications of the first total world war and to close what Bond terms ‘the gulf between serious historical studies and popular misconceptions’.<sup>38</sup> The Western Front debate, between revisionists and critics, continues to rage, overshadowing the many fine areas of research on the First World War. Studies such as Strachan’s *To Arms* are turning the tide and opening the debate up from a narrow focus to a world view of the First World War.<sup>39</sup>

The grip of the First World War as a purely military phenomenon loosened with such books as Marwick’s *The Deluge*, and Bond’s *War and Society in Europe 1870-1970*.<sup>40</sup> This has been further widened as the world approached the centenary of the Great War. Books by the likes of Charman, Gregory, Paxman and White are no longer just military narratives, and focus on the impact war had on society.<sup>41</sup> All make acknowledgments to the treatment of enemy aliens on the Home Front in Britain. As historians began to study British society in the Great War, from the 1960s onward it was only a matter of time before the issue of enemy aliens would become a research area in its own right.

Other works worth mentioning are Haste’s study of the development of propaganda during the First World War and Andrew’s works on the development of the Intelligence Services in the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> Both Haste and Andrew touch the fringes of the subject area. Haste’s landmark book *Keep the Home Fires Burning* is one of the first books to explore attitudes to enemy aliens in Britain in more than a few pages. A study of propaganda during the Great War, Haste devotes two chapters to the subject. One chapter focuses on how the concept of the evil Hun was developed through the use of propaganda techniques highlighting the abhorrent behaviour of the German soldier to

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<sup>37</sup> J Ellis & M Cox, *The World War I Databook* (London, 1993), p.270.

<sup>38</sup> B Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front* (Cambridge, 2002), p.75.

<sup>39</sup> H Strachan, *The First World War, Volume I: To Arms* (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> A Marwick, *The Deluge; British Society and the First World War* (London, 1965).

B Bond, *War and Society in Europe 1870-1970* (Leicester, 1983).

<sup>41</sup> T Charman, *The First World War on the Home Front* (London, 2014).

A Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2008).

J Paxman, *Great Britain’s Great War* (London, 2013).

J White, *Zeppelin nights; London in the First World War* (London, 2014).

<sup>42</sup> C Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning; Propaganda in the First World War* (London, 1977).

C Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm; the Authorized History of MI5* (London, 2009).

C Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London, 1985).

encourage ‘a hate-inspired lust for revenge.’<sup>43</sup> The second chapter then highlights how the image of evil Hun transferred across the Channel from the fighting front to be connected to the German immigrant community in Britain who were collectively identified as enemies within. One reservation concerns the development of propaganda during the First World War, which was not as black and white as Haste suggests. The need to influence the home front in total war certainly necessitated propaganda on a grand scale, but this was not achieved through any great plan or design on the part of government or military. Nor was that so-called propaganda sophisticated or efficient. Early propaganda relied upon the support of competing voluntary bodies and government departments and this continued until the government established a Ministry of Information in 1917.<sup>44</sup> Trial and error was the order of the day and there was a steep learning curve in the science of propaganda. The treatment and control of enemy aliens in war time exemplifies this steep curve.

Some of Haste’s arguments such as the suggestion that the German atrocities in Belgium examined in the Bryce Report (May 1915) were merely created for propaganda purposes do not stand the test of time. Horne and Kramer’s comprehensive study of German atrocities shows that events in Belgium as the German army marched through can no longer be solely explained as allied propaganda purely created to keep the home front fully supporting the war against Germany.<sup>45</sup> This is especially true as the atrocities occurred so early in the war. Brutality was a fact of total warfare and the threat of violent atrocities in a possible invasion brought fear to the home front.

As Belgian refugees fled to Britain in the autumn of 1914 and their stories were told and spread around the British Isles, so the fear of all things German increased. This is one factor that can be identified as a cause of the first wave of heightened Germanophobia experienced in October 1914. Even if the historical debate around German atrocities, has moved on, Haste’s chapters on ‘*The Evil Hun*’ and ‘*Aliens and Spies*’ provide a good introduction to the subject area.

Andrew’s studies of the intelligence services in Britain helps move the debate on. He argues that it is impossible to understand defence policy without considering the

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<sup>43</sup> Haste, op. cit., p.107.

<sup>44</sup> See for more detail: G Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester, 1992).

<sup>45</sup> J Horne & A Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (London, 2001).



subject of intelligence. He goes so far as to say ‘the historian of national and international politics can never afford to ignore it.’<sup>46</sup>

It is important here to understand that enemy alien legislation during the First World War is essentially a defensive policy. Often defence policy is only discussed in relation to external threats, but here it is valid to talk about internal defence and internal security. In 1914 Germany practiced universal male conscription and, this had been in place within Prussia since 1814. This meant that out of 53,000 Germans residing in Britain 40,000 were legally liable for German military service. These German citizen soldiers therefore posed a risk to the internal security of Britain on the outbreak of war and it was the Security Service’s role to assess the threat level.

The dimension that Andrew brings to the debate, the role that intelligence services played in informing government and public opinion, is acknowledged both by Bird and Panayi in so much as they make reference to the number of German spies arrested at the beginning of the Great War. However the role MO5g, later to be MI5, and the Secret Service Bureau played in gathering intelligence on enemy aliens and how this was used by the government and the press is not examined in any detail. The threat of German spies at work in Britain is dismissed as imaginary by Panayi.

Andrew provides a narrative history of the development of the intelligence service through the twentieth century. He barely touches upon the plight of the enemy aliens in Britain during the Great War, but does highlight the connection between the development of the intelligence services and the growth in spy mania and invasion stories that swept the country in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. It would be from the same sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), set up in reaction to these invasion and spy scares, that early enemy alien legislation and government secret service structures would spring.

It must be remembered that intelligence does not need to be right to be influential. It also follows that good intelligence is not always used to an advantage in a given situation or event. Andrew points to Douglas Haig as an example of someone who would disregard intelligence that went against his inner convictions.<sup>47</sup> This may have been the case with the perceived threat of enemy aliens in public opinion, where any intelligence report that contradicted the impression of thousands of German waiters and hairdressers

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<sup>46</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.xvi.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.165.

in Britain as trained reservists waiting to join a planned invasion would be disregarded in favour of the spy literature and Northcliffe newspapers' stories that the country had consumed for many years. This is Kahneman's theory of confirmation bias in action: 'You look for a plausible scenario that conforms to the constraints of reality'.<sup>48</sup> What Kahneman also highlights is that: 'people tend to assess the relative importance of issues by the ease with which they are retrieved from memory – and this is largely determined by the extent of coverage in the media.'<sup>49</sup>

Andrew also claims that during the battle of the Somme, 'Charteris's intelligence reports throughout the five-month battle were designed to maintain Haig's morale.'<sup>50</sup> This again begs the question, that if this type of abuse was taking place on the Western Front, what was happening at the heart of government concerning the threat posed by enemy aliens? Two issues highlighted by Andrew also add to the debate around the use of intelligence, its abuse and the role of self-interest.

The 2004 BBC Reith Lectures entitled 'The Climate of Fear', given by the Nigerian lecturer, writer and activist Wole Soyinka, and a BBC2 three-part documentary 'The Power of Nightmares' shown in the autumn of 2004, both focused on how fear and terror are created as an illusion to maintain power.<sup>51</sup>

Politicians once offered dreams of a better future; now they offer to protect us from nightmares. Fear becomes the political resource to be mined to boost politicians' own authority.<sup>52</sup>

Once a society is in the grip of fear, there is a shift in politics from where decisions are based on reality, to decisions and legislation based on what might be in the future. This is the theory of the 'Precautionary Principle': having the foresight to protect against possible harm. The problem with this is that it becomes a vicious circle and the person with the most vivid imagination becomes the most powerful: any political debate becomes distorted as decisions are made without evidence and because the 'what if' dominates proceedings.

Bill Durodie, Director of the International Centre for Security Analysis at King's College London, expands on the precautionary principle:

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<sup>48</sup> D Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London, 2012), p.324.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.167.

<sup>51</sup> W Soyinka, 'The Climate of Fear' 2004 BBC Reith Lectures (BBC Radio 4, 9-29 March 2004): A Curtis, 'The Power of Nightmares: The Shadows in the Cave,' *BBC Documentary Film* (BBC2, 3 November 2004).

<sup>52</sup> M Bunting, 'The Age of Anxiety', *The Guardian* (25 October, 2004).

In essence, the precautionary principle says that not having the evidence that something might be a problem is not a reason for not taking action as if it were a problem. That's a very famous triple-negative phrase that effectively says that action without evidence is justified. It requires imagining what the worst might be and applying that imagination upon the worst evidence that currently exists.<sup>53</sup>

By integrating the 'precautionary principle' and the 'paradigm of prevention', that have thus far only been used to interpret current-day security threats, into the debate surrounding enemy aliens in the Great War, we can move it forward. It helps us, by giving us a theory to benchmark with and understand the decision making process at a time when a weak government needed the population's continued support for war if a total victory was to be achieved against Germany.

The theories of using fear to gain and maintain power will also help us explain why the Northcliffe press and the MPs on the radical right might have used the enemy alien issue to further their own careers through fear during the Great War. Madeleine Bunting comments on its present day importance:

The peddling of fear is a lucrative business; security is the biggest global growth industry. Fear shifts newspapers and glues viewers to their TV screens. The media become profoundly complicit in promoting the interests of those who use fear, from terrorist to security analyst.<sup>54</sup>

The problem for the historian looking back is that much of the intelligence that the decisions of the day were based upon has been lost in government archive weeding processes, unlucky storage locations, or secret service bureau re-organisations. The policy for selection of documents for preservation from the security service was set out in March 2001 and revised in November 2005. Selection and acquisition of Security Service records to the National Archives is based upon 'the espionage threat to the UK and to the British Empire from Germany between 1909 and 1918'. This includes: records of major investigations, records of subversive figures and spies, records of individuals who achieved positions of public eminence or were involved in important historical events, records of cause célèbres in a security context, files which contain papers of historical interest, service policy, organisation and procedures, and milestones in the Service's history.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> B Durodie, interview by Curtis, in 'The Power of Nightmares', op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> M Bunting, op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> The National Archives (TNA), *Operational Selection Policy OSP8: The Security Service* (London, November 2005).

The records relating to the prisoners in the internment camps set up during the Great War to house male enemy aliens, likely to be Home Office material, were stored in the Covent Garden area of London during the Second World War. Unfortunately these card indexes which listed internees and their camp details were destroyed by fire as a result of bombing during the Blitz.

Again a number of records and files relating to the Secret Service Bureau and MI5 were also lost during the Second World War. What Peter Wright called ‘the nerve center of M.I.5’, the Security Service’s Registry, was moved out of central London to Wormwood Scrubs to protect it from bombing raids.<sup>56</sup> In September 1940 the prison suffered during enemy bombing and many of the Registry’s files were destroyed or damaged by fire. More files were destroyed following Bureau re-structure and reorganisation at the ends of both the First and Second World Wars.

The frustration for the historian is highlighted by Peter Wright’s search for information regarding his father’s involvement in Secret Service Bureau (MI6) operations in Norway during 1915. As an MI5 employee Peter Wright had direct access to the Security Service’s Registry and searched the Great War papers. The result was fruitless and he comments, ‘But I could find nothing; the M.I.6 weeders had routinely destroyed all the records years before.’<sup>57</sup>

The first release of Security Service files to the National Archives was in 1997. Eighty pieces concentrated on the birth of the Secret Service Bureau in 1909, its early years up to the outbreak of war in 1914, and how the bureau developed to meet the needs of the war between 1914 and 1918.<sup>58</sup> These range from the six-monthly progress reports written by Sir Vernon Kell, Kell’s diary entries, account books from the Great War, the memoirs of William Melville, staff lists and early meeting minutes and papers on how the secret service should be organised.<sup>59</sup> Much of the rest of the files released were summary reports of the different branches of MI5 which were compiled after the Great War. These include Branch A (Investigation of Espionage), Branch B (Prevention of Espionage), Branch C (Records & Port control), MI5D (Colonies & Overseas

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<sup>56</sup> P Wright, *Spy Catcher* (Richmond Australia, 1987), p.37.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>58</sup> TNA: KV1 Records of the British Counter-Intelligence Security Service.

<sup>59</sup> Major-General Sir Vernon George Waldegrave Kell, first head of the British Security Service MI5, between 1909 and 1940. William Melville Chief Detective British Security Services during its first eight years.

Dominions), MI5E (Control of Ports & Frontiers), MI5F (Prevention of Espionage), MI5G (Investigation of Espionage) and MI5H (central registry of information).

Considering that during the First World War the bureau kept a central registry of 250,000 card files and the details of 27,000 individuals, what has been released to the general public is pitifully small.<sup>60</sup> Still today there are blanked out documents and sections of material which are deemed too secret to release one hundred years later.

A ray of light has been the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act which came into force in January 2005. This has been slowly increasing the amount of material not just on the Security Service, but also other departments' papers and interactions with the Security Service, available to the historian.

The historian has access to the blueprints, structures, and legislation that were created by the Secret Service Bureau in response to the intelligence information and data coming into government during the early years of the twentieth century. From these can be constructed the development of a temporary structure in 1909 with a staff of just three, a bureau of fourteen by April 1914, re-organisation as MI5 in 1916 to, by 1918, the permanent structure in government with over eight hundred staff. Intelligence relating to spies, spying and alien activity in the United Kingdom in just this short period of time had created its own self-fulfilling bureaucracy.

By pulling together the links between Bird's examination of legislation, Panayi's social studies of the German community, Haste's propaganda influences and Andrew's Security Service intelligence focus, this thesis will gain a fuller picture of the government's decision making process in war time. It will develop understanding of the phenomenon, explaining not just how badly enemy aliens in Britain were treated, but why decisions to intern or repatriate them were made in the first place and on what grounds. Finally we will understand what led government and public opinion to believe enemy aliens to be such a threat to internal security and how intelligence information informed the debate. For a subject area that has tended to focus over the last thirty years purely on highlighting the hostility and hardships that the German immigrant community suffered in war time in Britain the intelligence perspective will move historical understanding forward.

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<sup>60</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.174.

## **Chapter one**

### **The birth of the Secret Service Bureau and the unofficial register of aliens**

Before being able to understand the threat of enemy aliens in Britain during the Great War it is necessary to understand pre-war thinking and decision-making. The actions and decisions of the key players who assessed the environment at the time and scanned the horizon for new threats facilitated the British Government's adoption of the premise that enemy aliens were a potential security threat to the home front in the event of a war with Germany. Two key, pre-war, developments stand out that demonstrate this premise: the birth of the Secret Service Bureau and the activity surrounding the compilation of the unofficial register of aliens. The establishment of the Bureau and the unofficial register of aliens became the foundations on which activity to mitigate the security threat from Germans in Britain at the outbreak of war in 1914 was built. Historical debate around this area has conventionally attributed the decisions taken to pursue an 'enemy alien' policy to wide spread public pressure created and fuelled by the spy mania and invasion scares between 1906 and 1909. However by focusing on the parties involved, their motivations and self-interests in setting enemy alien policy direction during the pre-war period this conventional assumption can be challenged as simplistic. These individuals tried to objectively understand the illusion of spies and saboteurs in Britain and then decided whether the security threat was one of fact and fiction.

This chapter will explore: the intelligence sources available to the government of the day which led them to deal with the enemy alien threat, and set the birth of the secret service in a wider context than one of a reaction purely to public pressure. It will also investigate the motives the interested parties had in the establishment of the Bureau and keeping the issue of enemy aliens at the centre of government thinking through the promotion of the unofficial register of aliens. Finally, the chapter will consider the growth in bureaucracy created by the register of aliens and the influential reach of the Bureau in this area. The register and the work of the Bureau were the focus for inter-departmental government working on alien policy that would become the accepted model during the Great War.

Seligmann shows that the British government was warned in 1907 of a possible German invasion of Britain, and that German spies were at work in Britain surveying the possible terrain of operations.<sup>1</sup> The sources feeding the British government were not just any old scaremongers, but credible individuals such as the UK's military attaché in Berlin,

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<sup>1</sup> M Seligmann, *Spies in Uniform* (Oxford, 2006). D Keys, 'How the First World War was Predicted', *BBC History Magazine*, Vol.7, Number 1 (2006).

Colonel Frederic Trench, and Britain's naval attaché Captain Philip Dumas. This shows that events such as the birth of the Secret Service Bureau in 1909 were not simply a response to public and newspaper pressure caused by spy mania.

From 1907 onwards both military and naval attachés based in Berlin were predicting a crisis point of German aggression towards Britain, varying from 1913 to 1915 in their dispatches. This was based on their personal experiences in Germany, which led them to believe that Germany was becoming a menace and they were witnessing increasing Anglophobia. These dispatches were widely circulated around British government departments and used as part of CID investigations into the probability of German invasion in 1908.<sup>2</sup> Seligmann highlights the importance of intelligence in government decision making:

As was recently demonstrated by the Second Gulf War against Iraq, intelligence concerning an enemy's capabilities can be very influential in determining policy, even if, as was the case in Iraq, this information turns out to be wrong. Was the same true in pre-First World War Britain when it came to managing relations with Germany? If, as seems likely, the answer is that intelligence was as important as it is now, then the question of whether the British government was in the dark or misinformed about Germany's true abilities or whether they possessed a reasonable understanding about their ultimate opponent is significant. It allows the historian to ask whether the British government framed a policy out of ignorance and suspicion or whether they forged a rational and informed response on the basis of credible and reliable data.<sup>3</sup>

This assumption can equally be applied to the birth of the Secret Service Bureau and its growth in the five years up until the outbreak of war.

Even before 1907 concerns were being raised within British government departments over the German spy menace. In 1904 a memorandum had been drawn up and circulated by the Foreign Office on the 'Secret Service arrangements in the event of war with Germany'.<sup>4</sup> By 1906 this had become a comprehensive document detailing, with MO2C's help, places where British observers should be stationed 'in the event of war or threat of war with Germany'.<sup>5</sup> These included ports, inland towns and the capitals of Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. What is interesting about this Foreign Office document is that it considers both the threat of German invasion of Britain and the threat of a land war with Britain, allied with France, against Germany. In the invasion scenario,

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.184.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>4</sup> A Cook, *M MI5's First Spymaster* (Stroud, 2006), p.184.

<sup>5</sup> TNA: FO 1093/45 Secret Service arrangements in the event of war with Germany. [MO2C: Under the Directorate of Military Operations, it was a sub-section of the European Section (M02) headed by Colonel Count Gleichen which collected information on the German Army.]



gathering information from the main ports of Kiel, Cuxhaven and Wilhelmshaven are the primary objectives: 'The Army's object in watching German ports will of course be to get the earliest notice of any preparations for embarking troops.'<sup>6</sup>

In the continental land war scenario, intelligence gathering switched to inland towns with observing stations in Germany, Belgium, and Holland feeding through to the collecting station in Liège and the forwarding station in Brussels. 'Designed to watch the points in German territory where concentrations of German troops would probably take place preparatory to an advance on France through Belgium.'<sup>7</sup>

The document highlights that the government in 1906 had not made up its mind as to the likely course Germany would take in the event of war. A 'bolt-from-the-blue' invasion by Germany appears not to have been ruled out in favour of a continental land advance on France through Belgium. What is also clear is the Foreign Office's belief in a structure of German counter-espionage agents at work on the continent.

The presence of German counter-espionage agents must however be reckoned on, who would spare no trouble or expense to hamper the collector in his work should they discover him. But this is an objection which would apply equally to any town in Denmark or Sweden.<sup>8</sup>

The Foreign Office Secret memorandum was being circulated in 1906, the year which also witnessed the publication of William Le Queux's novel *The Invasion of 1910*.<sup>9</sup> With the help of the *Daily Mail*'s serialisation of the book between 20 March and 4 July 1906, actors, dressed up in German soldiers' uniforms, were seen parading through towns in the south east of England as a publicity stunt. This marks the beginning of spy mania's grip on the nation.

The instructions for sending information from the seaport town of Groningen in the Foreign Office's Secret memorandum even reads like a passage from Erskine Childers' 1903 invasion novel *The Riddle of the Sands*:<sup>10</sup>

In war time, however, it is probable that observers will have to send most information by small boat using the maze of channels between the main-land and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. [The scenario coincides with the first Anglo-French and Anglo-Belgian staff talks.]

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> W Le Queux, *The Invasion of 1910* (London, 1906).

<sup>10</sup> E Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands* (Croydon, 1995).

the E. and W. Frisian Islands; the selection of skilful and daring boatmen to act as carriers will be one of the first duties of the Collector at Groningen.<sup>11</sup>

In fact Childers' novel is attributed by Hawes: 'to inspire the founding of the Secret Intelligence Service.'<sup>12</sup> Whilst such a direct link to the birth of the Intelligence Service is difficult to prove, the fictitious invasion plans did at least raise calls for the Naval Intelligence Department to assess its feasibility.<sup>13</sup>

William Melville, who worked for MO3 as general agent W. Morgan investigating suspicious German aliens in 1904, was shocked as to the absolute uselessness of the police in understanding the German spying threat in Britain and possible suspects.<sup>14</sup> Cook comments that Melville's: 'failure to encounter much suspicion in the populace at large was probably partly because the German of popular imagination, the stiff-necked, pompous, conceited, humourless Prussian, was not yet the butt of popular dislike that he later became.'<sup>15</sup> Melville was another source submitting reports to the Home Office to try and raise awareness of the possible threats from German spies with the police, coastguards and postal authorities.<sup>16</sup>

Against this background the Secret Service Bureau was born in 1909. Long before the public at large were gripped by spy fever and the fear of German invasion, British government departments had already begun to investigate the illusory nature of possible threats. The evidence from the likes of Berlin attachés, secret department memoranda, and MO3 defensive counter-espionage agents, all informed the government that enemy aliens were a threat to the stability of the country. Clearly, rather than responding to public and newspaper pressure, the British government were in the pre-war period considering respected intelligence from the field and using it to influence decision making and policy.

In 1907 the CID, chaired by (the soon to be Prime Minister) Herbert Asquith, together with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), First Sea Lord and senior Cabinet colleagues, began examining Britain's state of military preparedness against German invasion. In fact the call for the investigation into the possibilities of German

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<sup>11</sup> TNA: FO 1093/45 Secret Service arrangements in the event of war with Germany.

<sup>12</sup> J Hawes, *Englanders and Huns: How Five Decades of Enmity Led to the First World War* (London, 2014), p.371.

<sup>13</sup> P Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (New York, 1980), p.252.

<sup>14</sup> MO3: A department of the Military Operations directorate created under the War Office in 1903 charged with counter insurgency intelligence gathering. William Melville was later to become the Secret Service Bureau's first detective.

<sup>15</sup> Cook, op. cit., p.180.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.201.

invasion was initiated by the Prime Minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman through the CID. This was not the first time the CID had met to consider the likelihood of German invasion as the question had been raised and investigated by Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour in 1902.

Balfour created the CID, when Prime Minister, to research and co-ordinate defence policy and military strategy across government. It replaced the Cabinet Defence Committee which had been established in 1895 after the failings of the Cabinet Defence Committee became apparent during the South African War of 1899-1902. The importance of this new committee can be seen in that the Prime Minister himself chaired it, having replaced the Duke of Devonshire. Other members of the committee were appointed by the Prime Minister to assist him and usually included representatives of the army and navy, Cabinet ministers and key civil servants. Sir George Sydenham Clarke was the CID's first secretary between 1904 and 1907.

Asquith saw it as the Committee's role to bring about joined-up thinking between the Admiralty and War Office on all matters of defence.

It had long been a capital defect in our naval and military systems that there was no real co-ordination between them, no provision for joint, continuous, and systematic survey of all the problems of Imperial and domestic defence. It was under Mr. Balfour's Premiership that the gap was filled by the constitution of the Committee of Imperial Defence.<sup>17</sup>

By 1904, the CID had dismissed the possibility of invasion and a complete account of their finding was given to the House of Commons in May 1905.<sup>18</sup>

Even with Balfour's reassurances, and a change in government from Conservative to Liberal under Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the invasion debate continued through 1906. As shown earlier, the Foreign Office in 1906 had not fully ruled out the possibility of invasion from Germany, which slightly contradicts the CID's conclusions.

The CID under Asquith's steer met sixteen times between November 1907 and October 1908 to examine the possibilities of sudden German invasion. It resulted in the Committee dismissing invasion theories and surprise attacks as impossible: 'That so long as our naval supremacy is assured against any reasonably probable combination of Powers, invasion is impracticable.'<sup>19</sup> As Gooch stresses, by putting the invasion cries to

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<sup>17</sup> H Asquith, *The Genesis of the War* (London, 1923), pp.112-113.

<sup>18</sup> E Green, *Balfour* (London, 2006), p.34.

<sup>19</sup> Asquith, *The Genesis*, p.115.

bed the Admiralty and War Office could start discussing combined strategies for real scenarios.

Throughout the Victorian period the invasion crises had frequently been stimulated by alarmist statements from those in positions of authority and in the public eye, while the lack of co-ordination between the two services had compounded their effect by creating a void where realistic discussions of strategic capacities and political possibilities ought to have been taking place.<sup>20</sup>

However this co-operation or coherence of the War Office and Admiralty on future strategic possibilities was not forthcoming.

The conclusions reached by the CID in dismissing 'bolt-from-the-blue' invasion threats played to the army's strengths. By 1908 the War Office had started to make the assumption that a war with Germany would be fought on the European mainland by British expeditionary forces alongside the French armies.<sup>21</sup> Owen suggests that this assumption had been cemented back in 1906 when detailed secret communications between the French military attaché and Major-General Grierson, Director of Military Operations (DMO) began.<sup>22</sup> He points out that these secret discussions had been authorised by the Foreign Secretary Edward Grey and Secretary of State for War Richard Haldane. Owen also notes that these detailed conversations were only revealed to the Cabinet and Prime Minister Asquith in 1911, by which time 'continental rigidity' had set in.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the date for British General Staff continental rigidity as Strachan explains: 'its decision to do so had not become the basis of national policy by 1914.'<sup>24</sup>

Any concessions to invasion theories or new strategies on naval blockades and economic warfare would accordingly mean the General Staff of the Army would have to change their plans, possibly re-structure the army and agree to less of a role in any conflict in favour of that of the navy. 'Should the possibility of a German invasion of the British Isles be once conceded, it was inevitable that the army would be redesigned to meet this threat, which meant being remodelled as a home defence force.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> J Gooch, *The Prospect of War: Studies in British Defence Policy 1847-1942* (Abingdon, 1981), p.9.

<sup>21</sup> On the 8 April 1904 the Franco-British Agreement was signed. The entente meant that Germany replaced France as its traditional enemy in Europe. [See I Dunlop, *Edward VII and the Entente Cordiale* (London, 2004)].

<sup>22</sup> D Owen, *The Hidden Perspective: The Military Conversations 1906-1914* (London, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.28. [Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman knew of the military conversations in 1906, but when succeeded by Asquith in 1908 Grey failed to inform him of the discussions.]

<sup>24</sup> H Strachan, 'The British Army, its General Staff and the Continental Commitment 1904-14' in D French & B Holden Reid (eds), *The British General Staff: Reform and Innovation 1890-1939* (London 2002), p.66.

<sup>25</sup> Seligmann, op. cit., p. 230.

Ryan goes further to suggest that the German menace was provoked and initiated by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington, purely to encourage the establishment of conscription in Britain.<sup>26</sup> 'A calculated attempt to resurrect the invasion bogey as a means of stampeding the British government and public into ultimate adoption of conscription.'<sup>27</sup>

The spy scares and invasion threats that occupied the public imagination and the CID between 1906 and 1909 did give some credibility to the army's conscription premise. Christopher Andrew suggests that these were also a 'useful recruiting aid' for the Territorial Force which Haldane had established as part of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill (1907). When in 1909 a play called *An Englishman's Home*, that told the story of England's invasion, graced the London stage and resulted in a boost of recruiting to this Territorial Force, rather than try to allay the population's fears of possible German invasion, the War Office set up a recruiting booth at the theatre to exploit it. 'Defending such 'modern methods of recruiting' in the Commons, Haldane said they had produced 30,000 recruits in the first seven weeks of 1909.'<sup>28</sup> Here, Haldane's self-interest, to increase recruitment to the Territorial Force he had helped to set up, comes first over the necessity to inform the public to the reality of rumoured threat.

However, as far as Asquith was concerned the illusion of a sudden invasion had been laid to rest by the CID's conclusions in 1908.

We had, indeed, an interest in the strategic aspects of an unprovoked German invasion of France, almost as direct as and far more likely to become actual than a sudden German invasion of our own shores in time of peace; a chimerical danger with which the great authority of Lord Roberts alarmed the public imagination, and which, in deference to him, received careful and protracted investigation in 1907-8 by the Committee of Imperial Defence under my chairmanship. The report of the Committee demonstrated that such an enterprise was out of the range of practical warfare.<sup>29</sup>

David Lloyd George (Prime Minister 1916-1922), later endorsed Asquith's and the CID's prognosis.

In fact I always regarded it [German invasion] as a bogey invented by those who wanted to re-establish permanent conscription. I agreed with the decision of the

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<sup>26</sup> Military Correspondent of *The Times* newspaper.

<sup>27</sup> W Michael Ryan, 'The Invasion Controversy of 1906-1908: Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington and British Perceptions of the German Menace', *Military Affairs*, Vol.44, No.1 (Feb. 1980), p.9.

<sup>28</sup> Andrews, *Secret Service*, p.53.

<sup>29</sup> Asquith, op. cit., p.59.

Asquith Government that the Germans could not possibly accomplish more than a rush and a raid without artillery support.<sup>30</sup>

But even with Asquith's assurances, Andrew points out, 'The subcommittee's conclusion predictably failed to carry conviction with most of those whose arguments it had demolished.'<sup>31</sup>

Even though the CID dismissed invasion threats, a paper by Major James Edmonds, Head of special section, Director of Military Operations at the War Office, in December 1908 shows that the Committee must have at least been aware of German spy activity in Great Britain and the need to counter-act it. His paper emphasised that the German Nachrichten Intelligence Service had been known to have a French and Russian section, since until 1900 this section had co-operated with the British over Russian and French activity under a pro-English officer Major Dame. Major Dame had been removed and replaced by Major Brose described as 'an Anglophobe' in 1900.<sup>32</sup> Edmonds continued:

We now know definitely that a third Bureau, to deal with England, has been added to the Nachrichten (Secret Service) of the German General Staff. The Service is worked from Brussels, and we have recently had cause to believe partly from New York. The bureau was not in existence in 1899.<sup>33</sup>

Edmonds advocated the setting up of a system 'in England, to mark down spies and agents in peace and to remain in German lines, and spy on troops if they land.'<sup>34</sup> However his vision for a Secret Service organization went further than just reconnaissance. It included proposed legislative reform with the amendment of the Official Secret Act and the revival of the Registration of Aliens Act which had last been enforced in 1789 and 1804.<sup>35</sup>

The original registration of Aliens Act, on which Edmonds place great importance, had begun as a response to revolution in France. Passed by the British Government in 1793, the 'Alien Act' was intended to regulate and keep track of the influx of nearly 8,000 political refugees, both French and other nationalities, from Europe who

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<sup>30</sup> D Lloyd George, *War Memoirs* (London, 1936), Vol. II, p. 1585.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.49.

<sup>32</sup> TNA: KV 1/2 Report by J E Edmonds, 2 December 1908.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> TNA: KV 1/1 Organisation of the Secret Service: Note prepared for D.M.O, 8 October 1908.

were escaping the revolution.<sup>36</sup> The Act was later revived in 1804 and 1814 during time of European continental troubles.

The 1905 Aliens Act replaced an 1836 Act which had been put on the statute books 'as a safeguard'.<sup>37</sup> It was a response to demands for restriction on the large influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants which was at its height from the mid 1870's to the early twentieth century. The primary objective of the act was halting this flow of pauper aliens. Undesirable immigrants entering the United Kingdom were defined thus:

- (a) If he cannot show that he has in his possession or is in a position to obtain the means of decently supporting himself and his dependents (if any); or
- (b) If he is a lunatic or an idiot, or owing to any disease or infirmity appears likely to become a charge upon the rates or otherwise a detriment to the public; or
- (c) If he has been sentenced in a foreign country with which there is an extradition treaty for a crime; not being an offence of a political character, which is, as respects that country, an extradition crime within the meaning of the Extradition Act, 1870; or
- (d) If an expulsion order under this Act has been made in his case.<sup>38</sup>

The Act gave the Secretary of State for the Home Office power to make expulsion orders where he saw fit for undesirable Aliens to leave the country.

- (a) If it is certified to him [the Secretary of State] by any court (including a court of summary jurisdiction) that the alien has been convicted by that court that has the power to impose imprisonment without the option of a fine.
- (b) If it is certified to him by a court of summary jurisdiction after proceedings taken for the purpose within twelve months after the alien has last entered the United Kingdom.<sup>39</sup>

The Aliens Act 1905 led to the appointment of immigration officers, medical inspectors and immigration Boards at ports around the United Kingdom, and a noticeable decline in the numbers of Eastern Europeans immigrants coming to Britain. But as Kershen points out: 'Yet if the volume of immigrants declined, anti-alienism did not.'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> T Crowdy, *The Enemy Within; A History of Espionage* (Oxford, 2006), p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> A Kershen, 'The 1905 Aliens Act', *History Today*, Vol 55, number 3 (2005), p.13.

<sup>38</sup> The National Archives (TNA): Alien Act 1905: [www.movinghere.org.uk](http://www.movinghere.org.uk).  
[http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/catalogue.asp?phase=&keywords=1905+aliens+act&fuzzy=&format=&community=&theme=&date\\_from=&date\\_to=&source=&section=c%2C+s%2C+histories%2C+roots%2C+thegallery&person=N&searchType=&url=default1%2Ehtm&linkback=Back+to+homepage&PageMove=Goto&PageNo=1&Message=&RecordID=77093&ResourceTypeID=2&sequence=71](http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/catalogue.asp?phase=&keywords=1905+aliens+act&fuzzy=&format=&community=&theme=&date_from=&date_to=&source=&section=c%2C+s%2C+histories%2C+roots%2C+thegallery&person=N&searchType=&url=default1%2Ehtm&linkback=Back+to+homepage&PageMove=Goto&PageNo=1&Message=&RecordID=77093&ResourceTypeID=2&sequence=71), 18 February 2008

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Kershen, op. cit., p.19.

Edmonds realised that under the current legal situation: ‘There is no objection under international law to the expulsion of undesirable aliens but apparently we have no municipal law to effect it, the Aliens Act only deals with special classes.’<sup>41</sup> He understood that for the Secret Service Bureau to have some teeth alien legislation would require overhauling. Edmonds also saw a major part of the new Secret Service Bureau’s role was to champion law reforms. What was important for Edmonds was to convince decision makers that Anti-alien legislation in times of national security threats was not a new way of thinking.

With sixty recent reported cases of German espionage along the south-east coast and in London reaching Edmonds in 1908, he continued to petition the government to act in tracing the whereabouts of foreigners in Britain.

Unless a Secret Service system is prepared, we shall enter on a war fatally handicapped. There is no doubt whatever that the same careful preparations which were made in France before 1870 are now being made in Eastern districts of England.<sup>42</sup>

The resulting proposal for an interdepartmental conference from Edmonds led to the setting up of a sub-committee, reporting to the CID, under Richard Haldane, Secretary of State for War, in March 1909 to consider: ‘the nature and extent of foreign espionage that is at present taking place within this country and the danger to which it may expose us’.<sup>43</sup> A remit to consider the illusory threat of a network German spies and saboteurs on British soil. In 1909 the twelve member sub-committee met three times between March and July.<sup>44</sup> Apart from the chairman’s obvious bias, the makeup of the committee appears balanced between the War Office, Admiralty and neutral bystanders.

It was to this sub-committee that Edmonds gave his evidence of German espionage in Britain. Presenting evidence to the committee alongside Edmonds was Captain Temple, staff officer to Rear-Admiral Alexander Bethell in the Naval Intelligence Department (NID). Morris suggests that Edmonds and Temple ‘worked closely and

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<sup>41</sup> TNA: KV 1/2 Report by J E Edmonds, 2 December 1908.

<sup>42</sup> TNA: KV 1/1 Organisation of the Secret Service: Note prepared for D.M.O on 8 October 1908.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 53.

<sup>44</sup> Sub-Committee members: Reginald McKenna (First Lord of the Admiralty), Herbert Gladstone (Home Secretary), Sydney Buxton (Postmaster-General), Viscount Esher (permanent member of the CID), Sir Charles Hardinge (Permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office), Sir George Murray (Permanent Secretary to the Treasury), Rear-Admiral Alexander Bethell (Director of Naval Intelligence), Major-General John Ewart (Director of Military Operations), Brigadier-General Archibald Murray (Director of Military Training), Sir Edward Henry (Commissioner of Police), Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Ottley (Secretary).



amicably' so any divisions between War Office and Admiralty over war strategies were not shown.<sup>45</sup> The sub-committee concluded that: 'an extensive system of German espionage exists in this country, and we have no organisation for keeping in touch with that espionage and for accurately determining its extent and objectives'.<sup>46</sup>

Andrew labels Edmonds' evidence to the sub-committee as 'flimsy' and some of it 'bogus' and concludes that later even Edmonds 'acknowledged that the plans were an obvious forgery'.<sup>47</sup> However, with Haldane in the chair, directing the sub-committee's findings, its conclusions led directly to the setting up of a Secret Service Bureau (SSB) which was given approximately two years to prove or disprove the theory of an organised German spy network operating within the British Isles.

It is interesting here to stop and consider the use of intelligence and information in the decision making process. Intelligence does not necessarily have to be correct for a person or government to act on it, but it must at least massage their existing preconceptions of a given situation. This is the theory of confirmation bias by which wrong intelligence which reinforces preconceptions is more likely to be acted on than correct intelligence that turns a firmly held view on its head. Chabris and Simons attribute this to humans jumping to conclusions and that: 'the illusory perception of causes from correlations is closely tied to the appeal of the stories'.<sup>48</sup> The use of intelligence information is never black and white and rarely is there enough of it to view the whole picture when making a decision. One piece of intelligence can be interpreted many different ways by many government departments who all may share the same common interest. The Director General of the Security Service between 2002 and 2007, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, highlighted the problems of using intelligence in 2006, which has not really changed since the beginning of the Bureau inception back in 1909:

Moreover, intelligence is usually bitty and needs piecing together, assessing, judging. It takes objectivity, integrity and a skeptical eye to make good use of intelligence: even the best of it never tells the whole story. On the basis of such incomplete information, my Service and the police make decisions on when and how to take action, to protect public safety.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> A Morris, *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament 1896–1914* (London, 1984), p.160.

<sup>46</sup> TNA: CAB 16/8: Report and Proceedings of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, pp.iii-iv: C Andrew, *M.I.5: The First Ten Years, 1909 – 1919* (Kew, 1997), p.3.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, pp.56 – 57.

<sup>48</sup> C Chabris & D Simons, *The Invisible Gorilla and Other Ways Our Intuition Deceives Us* (London, 2011), p.165.

<sup>49</sup> Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, speech at Queen Mary's College, London, 9 November 2006, <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page374.html>, 17 February 2008.

The CID's decision to set up a Secret Service Bureau was a half-way house to appease the 'invasionist' camp and gain some co-ordination of intelligence and intelligence organisations between the War Office, the Admiralty and other government departments.

The War Office appears to have been least receptive to those submissions that contested its notions about a German invasion of Britain and most receptive to those that confirmed its ideas, such as those detailing the magnitude of German espionage in the United Kingdom. Likewise, the Foreign Office lent the greatest credence to dispatches supportive of its general outlook and was most dismissive of those that challenged its existing preconceptions.<sup>50</sup>

What the CID's decision also supported was wider government inter-departmental working as both the Home Office and the Foreign Office had to be involved if the Secret Service Bureau was to be a success. The Home Office provided the link to regional police forces who gave information as to the extent of espionage around Britain, while the Foreign Office funded the Bureau. Resources and intelligence were to be provided equally by the War Office and Admiralty.

In 1908 the Foreign Office's view of the new Bureau's objectives followed the same lines as Edmond's: that there was an urgent need not only to expose any German spy network in the United Kingdom but also to boost legislation against aliens in the event of war.

It should, on behalf of the Naval Intelligence Division and the General Staff, take charge of the investigation of all cases of suspected espionage, the surveillance of suspected foreign agents, the compilation of a record and a register of suspected aliens, the recruiting, payment and management of all agents at home and abroad, the interviewing of persons who offer information, and conduct all correspondence on the above subjects, and in war control all aliens within the United Kingdom.<sup>51</sup>

However it is in the reporting structure of the new Bureau that the Foreign Office differed from that suggested by Edmonds:

The Bureau should be under the orders of the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, but worked in the interests of the Naval Intelligence Division and General Staff, whose representatives should keep close touch with the head of the Bureau, have access at all times to its records and indicate its policy. It should keep the Naval Intelligence Division and General Staff and Officers designated by them, notably Commanders-in-Chief and Commanders of Coast Defences, informed of its operations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Seligmann, op. cit., p.248.

<sup>51</sup> TNA: FO 1093/27 Suggestions by the General Staff regarding a Secret Service Bureau, 1909.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

The Foreign Office saw control resting with a civil arm of governments, however Edmonds wanted the War Office and Admiralty in the driving seat. Edmonds' thinking for a proposed interdepartmental conference looked to focus upon: 'How far can the civil departments of the State assist the Admiralty and the War Office in tracing and ascertaining the residences and vocations of foreigners in the coast districts and vicinity of London?'<sup>53</sup>

The setting up of the Secret Service Bureau in 1909 was not a direct response to spy mania that was sweeping the British Isles at the time. The spy literature from the likes of Erskine Childers and William Le Queux and the newspaper reports of Zeppelins spotted over the North Sea from the Northcliffe press, may have raised the issue into national consciousness. It also caused tricky questions in Parliament when in May 1909 Sir John Barlow M.P. asked whether the government knew about the 66,000 German trained soldiers working as waiters, butchers, hairdressers and language teachers in England, a reserve army in waiting.<sup>54</sup> The evidence suggests, however, that the government had to wait for popular public opinion to catch up with their own thinking before they could introduce laws that would limit alien immigrants' freedoms.

By its very nature, being 'secret', the Secret Service Bureau represented a reaction to the intelligence it received from its trusted sources in various government departments. This was not an act to reassure the public about the German spy problem, as they had no knowledge of the bureau or why it had been set up. It had been a reaction to intelligence and the need to prove or disprove once and for all the idea that there was a structured German spy and sabotage operation working within the British Isles, with the intent of building up information for a possible invasion or raids.

Once the sub-committee had made its recommendations, a meeting was held on Thursday 26 August 1909 between the interested parties to consider the arrangements in establishing a Secret Service Bureau. The meeting took place in the office of Sir Edward Henry, the Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis London. In attendance were Major-General Ewart Colonel Edmonds, and Lieutenant Colonel Macdonogh from the

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<sup>53</sup> TNA: KV 1/2 Report by J E Edmonds 2 December 1908.

<sup>54</sup> P Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, p.37. [Sir John Barlow: Liberal Member of Parliament for Frome in Somerset.]

War Office, and Captain Temple representing the Naval Intelligence Department.<sup>55</sup> At the meeting it was agreed that the Bureau should be started as soon as suitable offices (already located at 64 Victoria Street, S.W. London) could be obtained.

A brief paper from the Foreign Office regarding a Secret Service Bureau suggested that: 'The head of the bureau should be a retired naval or military officer who should if possible have served in the Naval Intelligence Division or Operations Division of the General Staff and must be a good linguist. Pay £500 per annum in addition to retired pay.'<sup>56</sup>

The meeting proposed to appoint Captain V.G. Kell to the Bureau as the War Office representative and Commander Mansfield G Smith Cumming to the Bureau as the Admiralty representative. Kell is described at the meeting as 'an exceptionally good linguist and is qualified in French, German, Russian and Chinese' and Cumming as a man 'who possesses special qualifications for the appointment'.<sup>57</sup> On 19 September Vernon George Waldegrave Kell wrote a letter agreeing to the Secret Service Bureau appointment. 'I agree to the conditions you have mentioned viz: salary of £500 in addition to my full pension; and on the understanding that I am to hold the appointment for a minimum period of two years from the date of taking it over.'<sup>58</sup>

Kell with the South Staffordshire Regiment, 36 at the time of the appointment, had proposed to retire. Born in Great Yarmouth whilst his mother had been on holiday there in 1873, Kell had been educated at Sandhurst and afterwards had joined the British Army. As an army interpreter he spent two years in Moscow from 1898 and then two years in Shanghai. By 1902 his skills as a linguist had been recognised with a position as a German intelligence analyst with the War Office where he stayed until 1906. Andrew describes Kell as: 'the most accomplished linguist ever to head a British intelligence agency'.<sup>59</sup>

What is interesting about Kell's letter is the reference to the minimum period. It shows that maybe not everybody saw the establishment of the Secret Service Bureau as a permanent fixture. Again this goes back to the invasion theories and who would stand to

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<sup>55</sup> TNA: KV 1/3 Memorandum Re Formation of a S.S. Bureau, 26 August 1909. Major General John Spencer Ewart: Director of Military Operations, War Office 1906–1910. Lieutenant Colonel George Macdonogh: General Staff Officer, grade 2, with the Military Operations Directorate, War Office.

<sup>56</sup> TNA: FO 1093/27 Suggestions by the General Staff regarding a Secret Service Bureau, 1909

<sup>57</sup> TNA: KV 1/3 Memorandum Re Formation of a S.S. Bureau, 26 August 1909.

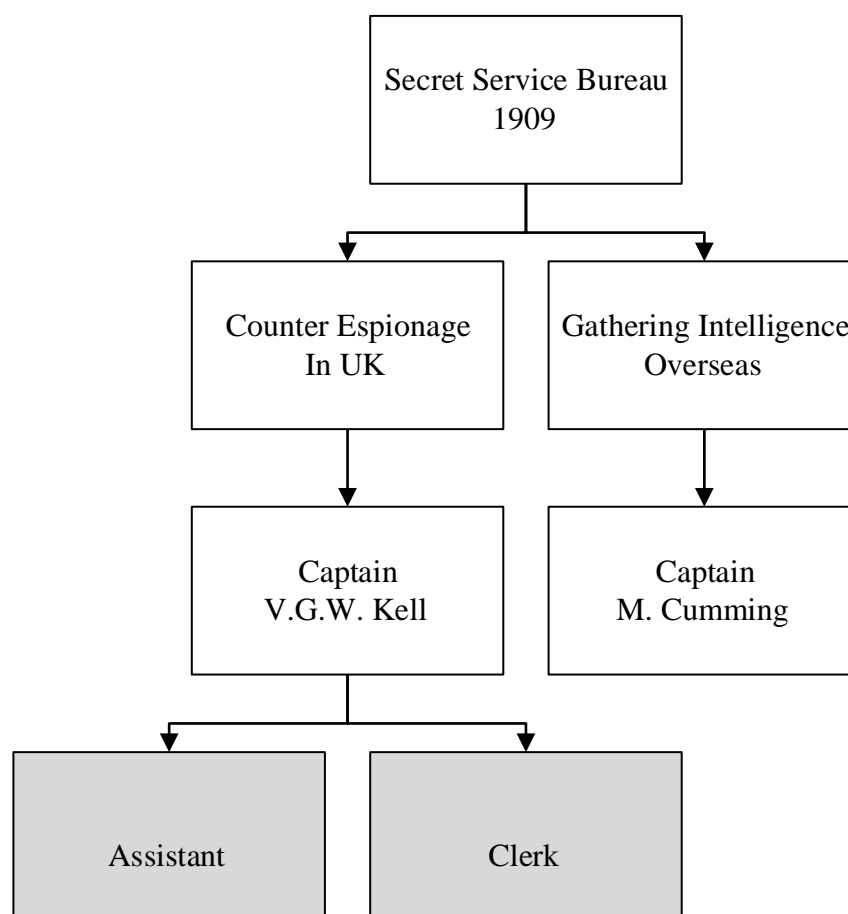
<sup>58</sup> TNA: KV 1/5 Kell's Letter agreeing to the S.S. Bureau appointment, 19 September 1909.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.23.

lose from admitting there was such a threat. The Secret Service Bureau was therefore a half-way house, with a limited time span to prove or disprove the idea that German spies were operating within the British Isles.

The Secret Service Bureau opened in October 1909. The Bureau was to be shared between Kell, who was responsible for the Home Section dealing with counter espionage in the UK, and Cumming, who was in charge of the Foreign Section that gathered overseas intelligence and liaised with espionage agents in the field.

Figure 1. Structure of the Secret Service Bureau in October 1909 <sup>60</sup>



Since the Secret Service Bureau was on a two-year trial run, between 1909 and 1914 Kell's Bureau filed progress reports every six months. These reports give the reader an idea of the Bureau's work and the key areas of interest that it concentrated its resources on. Of course as the intention of the progress reports must have been to justify the existence of the Bureau, enhancing its profile and increasing its finances, they do tend to

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<sup>60</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 'H' Branch Report. The Organisation and Administration of M.I.5. & FO 1093/27: Suggestions by the General Staff regarding a Secret Service Bureau, 1909.

be extremely positive. An example of this can be gained from the first six-monthly progress report circulated in March 1910. The conclusions of the report are:

- (a) The bureau had justified its institution.
- (b) The experience gained has proved that it is essential to the effective working of the Counter-espionage section of the Bureau, that all information coming within its province should be sent to and exclusively dealt with by the bureau.<sup>61</sup>

Along with these reports there are minutes of regular meetings held at the Foreign Office to discuss any matters connected with the Secret Service Bureau, Kell's diary extracts and the Secret Service expenditure estimates. All these sources build up a picture of the activity that the Secret Service Bureau carried out between its birth and the declaration of war in 1914. The concentration of resources in those early days appeared to focus upon investigations into reports of spying within the British Isles and the establishment of a nationwide 'unofficial' register of aliens in Britain.<sup>62</sup>

What is clear is that for the Secret Service Bureau to function efficiently it required the cooperation of the Foreign Office, Home Office and War Office, and when the Bureau took its first steps all the interested parties were there to support it.

It is understood that all classes of government officials especially the police, post office and customs will be invited to assist in the reporting of suspected foreign agents. Without this the Bureau would be dependent on casual reports of individuals and could accomplish nothing really useful.<sup>63</sup>

Policies introduced through Parliament such as the Official Secrets Act (1911) and the Aliens Restriction Order (1914) may have been seen outwardly as being championed by the Home Office, but at their beating hearts these policies' developments had been driven by the Secret Service Bureau. In fact by the outbreak of war the Secret Service Bureau was the glue between the different government departments and a central agency leading the way on all issues concerning enemy aliens and the internal security of the British Isles.

Most of the first six-monthly report talks about two investigations: the Rusper case and the Frant case.<sup>64</sup> It also mentions the need for the co-operation of the Chief-Constables of Britain if the Bureau was to work effectively, and the necessity for

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<sup>61</sup> TNA: KV 1/9: Kell's Bureau six-monthly progress reports: (1) October 1909 to March 1910.

<sup>62</sup> TNA: KV 1/35 "F" Branch: The Prevention of Espionage. Part I - Preventive intelligence. Pre War period: Paragraph 15. Report compiled 1921.

<sup>63</sup> TNA: FO 1093/27 Suggestions by the General Staff regarding a Secret Service Bureau, 1909

<sup>64</sup> Rusper is a Sussex village where suspicious German activity was reported. The Frant case linked a Sussex poultry farm to a German agents' rendezvous location. C Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, pp.30-31.

legislative changes to the Official Secrets Act to help in cases involving the safety of the Empire. Kell assessment of the situation in March 1910 was:

At present no power to complete one's evidence by preliminary search on suspicions, although search-warrants are freely granted in trivial cases of larceny; i.e. Under the Army Act 1881, sect 156. Subsect.5. a magistrate may grant a search-warrant upon reasonable cause for suspicion that anyone has in his possession the property of a comrade (e.g. a blanket!), and yet in cases involving the safety of the Empire, there is no such power which the Chief Constables could avail themselves of.<sup>65</sup>

Edmonds' ideal of the Bureau 'tracing and ascertaining the residences and vocations of foreigners in the coast districts and vicinity of London'<sup>66</sup> was given a boost and much needed support with the setting up of the Aliens sub-committee under the CID in March 1910. Chaired by Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary with the brief to study the question of the 'treatment of aliens in time of war', the sub-committee approved the Secret Service Bureau's setting up of an unofficial register of enemy aliens in Britain compiled from information supplied by regional police forces. The sub-committee also set the process rolling for the Aliens Restriction Act which would become an important piece of legislation passed by Parliament at the beginning of war in August 1914. As Panayi states: 'Clearly, the restrictions of the period 1914-18 had quite a firm basis in the various measures introduced in the Edwardian period.'<sup>67</sup> This is an important point as the unofficial register of aliens is not driven by public or press pressure to an illusory threat.

The sub-committee's approval of the secret alien register led to an increase in activity for the Secret Service Bureau and those whom it connected with to complete the register. By October 1910, just six months later, the details of over five hundred aliens had been registered and over two hundred cases of alleged espionage had been investigated.<sup>68</sup>

The second of Kell's Bureau's six-monthly reports for April to October 1910 shows just how the Bureau was becoming the nerve centre in the co-ordination of reported spying cases and tracking of enemy alien activity.

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<sup>65</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909-1914: (1) October 1909 to March 1910.

<sup>66</sup> TNA: KV 1/2 Report by J E Edmonds, 2 December 1908.

<sup>67</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy Within*, p .38.

<sup>68</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909-1914: (2) April 1910 to October 1910.

Early in the coming year I hope to have returns in from the Chief Constables, giving details of every alien residing in the Counties of N. Riding, E. Riding, Lincoln, Norfolk, E. Suffolk, Essex, Kent, E Sussex, W. Sussex, Cornwall, Isle of Wight; also Surrey, Wilts and Bucks.<sup>69</sup>

However, by the second six-monthly briefing the reporting lines between Captain Kell and Captain Cummings had been divided, a measure that would eventually lead to the formation of separate Bureaus under MI5 and MI6 that are still recognisable today. Cumming was entrusted with the work of espionage abroad and Kell was made responsible for counter-espionage within Britain.<sup>70</sup> Cook believes that there had been an unwillingness to share information on the army's side and this led to the navy and Cumming being side-lined.<sup>71</sup> This tit for tat behaviour between the two services continued into 1910 when the Admiralty prohibited coastguards from helping Kell draw up his register of aliens.<sup>72</sup> Given the importance by the aliens sub-committee to the task of building an unofficial register of aliens, Kell's Bureau started to receive the help and support it needed from various government departments.

The diary highlights Kell's connections with people in high places that had been cemented in just one year since the Bureau's inception. In August 1910 his diary recorded receiving information about a Major Kremnitz, who was suspected of being one of the heads of the German espionage in Britain. The information had made it to Kell's desk from Colonel Frederic Trench, former Military Attaché in Berlin, via an intermediary.<sup>73</sup> On 29 August 1910 Kell wrote, 'I spoke to the D.M.O. about this and asked him to give me a letter of introduction to Col. Trench, which he did. I wrote to Trench saying I would go and see him next week if convenient'<sup>74</sup> His diary for 1910-1911 did not record whether Kell met up with Trench face to face.

Kell's Diary for the end of October 1910 gives an insight into his work to design an alien registration form that Chief Constables around the British Isles could use to inform the Bureau of suspicious foreigners.

25 October 1910

I had an interview with Sir Edward Troup at 1p.m. and discussed the advisability of issuing printed "Alien Returns" to the Chief Constables.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> The division of duties and responsibilities was agreed at a meeting 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1909. See: A Judd, *The quest for C* (London, 2000), p.155.

<sup>71</sup> Cook, op. cit., p.214.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.216.

<sup>73</sup> M Seligmann, *Military Intelligence From Germany 1906-1914* (Stroud, 2014), p.23.

<sup>74</sup> TNA: KV 1/10 Kell's Diary, 1 June 1910 to 28 July 1911.



He suggested a note be put on the form saying that all information was to be collected confidentially and no question of inquisitorial nature asked. He asked me to get a proof printed and he would submit it for approval to the Home Secretary.

27 October 1910

I saw Mr C Harrison and asked him to print me a specimen Alien Form. He promised to get it done at the Secret Printing-Office at the Foreign Office.

31 October 1910

I handed a specimen proof of the “Alien Return” to Sir E. Troup’s Secretary, to be laid before the Home Secretary for approval.

3 November 1910

The Home Secretary approved of the “Aliens Returns”. I ordered 1,500 copies to be printed by Mr C. Harrison.<sup>75</sup>

Sir Charles Edward Troup was, in 1910, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office. He had risen through the Home Office ranks after starting as a junior clerk in 1880, and had a background in criminal and legal work. As Assistant Under-Secretary between 1902 and 1908 he had been responsible for police and criminal work. He had also worked for a time in the Home Office’s Parliamentary branch that specialised in parliamentary bills affecting the Home Office.<sup>76</sup>

Troup’s advice to Kell at their meeting on the 25 October 1910 is interesting and given his background in Home Office parliamentary bills rather telling. He was probably well aware that the register of aliens had no parliamentary approval and so always had to be ‘collected confidentially and no questions of inquisitorial nature asked’ yet Home Official personnel were fully supporting its creation.<sup>77</sup>

The Home Secretary who approved the ‘Aliens Returns’ forms for the Bureau was Winston Churchill. Looking back on 1911 Churchill actually mentions the contact he had with the Secret Service Bureau.

I inquired further about sabotage and espionage and counter espionage. I came in touch with other officers working very quietly and very earnestly, but in a small

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> P. W. J. Bartrip, ‘Troup, Sir Charles Edward (1857–1941)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/60141>, accessed 13 Jan 2008].

<sup>77</sup> Cook, p.216.

way and with very small means. I was told about German spies and agents in the various British ports.<sup>78</sup>

Already in the two years since the birth of the Bureau Kell had made a powerful impression with key decision makers in government. Cook puts this down to Kell having the right background:

If he [Kell] needed a signature or a decision he could wriggle swiftly upstream through the bureaucracy to the highest level because he had been to the right schools, came of the right class. (It has been suggested that he may have known Churchill at Sandhurst.)<sup>79</sup>

The memoirs of William Melville corroborate the Sandhurst connection, although the language used by Churchill suggests another reason: the compelling intelligence reports that Kell's Bureau produced.<sup>80</sup> Churchill went further to help the Bureau during his time as Home Secretary.

Hitherto the Home Secretary had to sign a warrant when it was necessary to examine any particular letter passing through the Royal Mails. I now signed general warrants authorizing the examination of all the correspondence of particular people upon a list, to which additions were continually made. This soon disclosed a regular and extensive system of German-paid British agents. It was only in a very small part of the field of preparation that the Home Secretary had any official duty of interference, but once I got drawn in, it dominated all other interests in my mind.<sup>81</sup>

In Asquith's cabinet reshuffle on 24 October 1911, Churchill exchanged the Home Office for the Admiralty with McKenna. However the move did not stop Churchill from continuing to promote the work of Kell and his Bureau. A letter from Churchill to Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office on 22 November 1911 shows him sharing the reports from the Secret Service Bureau with other members the new Cabinet.

Capt Kell of the War Office secret service has given me the enclosed bundle of reports, which resulted from the action taken by him in conjunction with the Chief Constable during my tenure of the Home Office. Although there is a lot of 'stuff' mixed up with them, they are well worth looking through because they show that we are the subject of a minute and scientific study by German military and naval authorities, and that no other nation in the world pays us such attention. Will you show them to Lloyd George when he dines with you tomorrow night? I should add that Kell is thoroughly trustworthy and competent, & that of course the names and addresses of almost all the persons referred to are known.

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<sup>78</sup> W S Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911-1918* (London, 1938 edn), Vol.1, p.36.

<sup>79</sup> Cook, op. cit., p.226.

<sup>80</sup> TNA: KV 1/8 Memoir of William Melville MVO MBE. [Kell entered the Royal Military College in 1892 joining the South Staffordshire Regiment two years later and Churchill entered Sandhurst as an infantry cadet in September 1893 and graduated in 1895 as a cavalry officer in the Queens Own Hussars.]

<sup>81</sup> Churchill, op cit., p.36.

The information is of course secret. A good deal more is accumulating through the warrant that I issued as Home Secretary for the inspection of correspondence.<sup>82</sup>

The letter demonstrates the value that Kell's intelligence reports were to other governmental departments and his exemplary reputation with Cabinet members. Chance meetings at Sandhurst were unlikely over intelligence reports, to dominate the mind of Churchill.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, on this occasion the reports from the Secret Service Bureau never made it to the desk of Lloyd George as Grey read them after his dinner appointment with Lloyd George. Grey returned the bundle of reports to Churchill.<sup>84</sup>

At a meeting on 20 April 1911, between Kell and the Chief Constables of east and south coast counties held at the Home Office, Sir Edward Troup even joined the private meeting to show his support for what Kell and the Bureau were trying to achieve in the building of the unofficial register of aliens.

My position was greatly strengthened by the fact that Sir Edward Troup was present, for a short time, during the meeting. He said that "although the meeting was entirely a private one – and had not been convened by the Home Office – he had the authority of the Home Secretary to say that the work was being carried out with the approval of Mr Churchill and that he appreciated the assistance which the Chief Constables had given to Captain Kell."<sup>85</sup>

When Kell's Bureau was not involved in compiling the unofficial register of aliens it was following up and investigating reports of suspicious behaviour sent to it by other government departments and police sources. Examples of the type of reports have found their way into the Foreign Office archives. The file labelled 'Secret' contains miscellaneous papers and letters on foreign espionage in England.<sup>86</sup>

A letter, dated 9 January 1910, had been passed on to Captain Haldane in MO5 at the War Office from the Staff College in Camberley Surrey.<sup>87</sup> The letter detailed the friendship between a Miss Rogers of Eastbourne and a Lieutenant Jacgens aged 20 who belonged to a Hanoverian Light cavalry regiment. Jacgens, who owned a 'pale blue and

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<sup>82</sup> R Churchill (ed), *Winston S Churchill: Volume II, Companion Part 2 1907–1911* (London, 1969), p.1342.

<sup>83</sup> See Alan Brooke's diaries for an account of one man's struggle to manage the hundreds of ideas and the vivid imagination of Winston Churchill. A Danchev & D Todman (ed), *Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke War Diaries 1939–1945* (London, 2002). [In May 1940, when Churchill became Prime Minister, the right schooling and class did not stop Churchill from dismissing Kell as head of MI5 in favour of promoting Brigadier Harker to the rank of acting Director General until Sir David Petrie was appointed Director General in November 1940.]

<sup>84</sup> R Churchill, op. cit., p.1343.

<sup>85</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914: (3) Report on the work done by the Counter-Espionage section of the Secret Service Bureau from October 1910 to May 1911.

<sup>86</sup> TNA: FO 1093/28 Foreign Espionage in England, May 1909 to January 1910.

<sup>87</sup> In the MI5 staff lists for 1918 Haldane is listed as head of 'H' Branch. TNA: KV1/52: List of Staff, 20 September 1918.

white uniform with steel helmet', had told Miss Rogers that he had received official telegrams and a private letter from Germany.<sup>88</sup> These stated that war was likely to be declared by Germany in February 1910 and that German forces would land somewhere between Eastbourne and Bognor Regis, with a first major battle fought somewhere in the New Forest. His reason for telling Miss Rogers was so that she could leave Eastbourne and get out of danger. The letter written by Mr C Beaumont goes on to explain:

The reason why he [Lieutenant Jacgens] was upset about the news was because he thinks that his country will not be successful as the attempt would be premature, but he fears that the Pan-Germans are very truculent and they under estimate the strength of England, moreover there is much dissatisfaction in Germany with the heavy taxation and the Pan-Germans hope the war would be successful and enable them to obtain huge war indemnity. Another reason why they are likely to make a dash early in February is that they expect things to be upside down owing to the election, and moreover, the Admiralty will be in an unsettled state from changes occurring there.<sup>89</sup>

Other examples of the type of investigations carried out by the Bureau are contained within Kell's diary. The diary also showed how hands-on Kell was with investigations:

18 November 1910

Major Thwaites wrote saying that six Germans had been dining at Terriani's Restaurant (No.88, Brompton Road), opposite Harrod's for the last 10 days.<sup>90</sup> They appeared to be very secretive and it was suggested that they were engaged on S.S. Stanley Clarke and myself dined tonight at that Restaurant, also "M", but no Germans turned up.<sup>91</sup> I will keep a watch on the place.

24 November 1910

I called on Mrs Holms (Major Thwaites' sister) who had given the information about the six Germans dinning at Terriani's Restaurant. She learnt from the waiter there that these Germans had gone to Paris for a few days and he would let her know when they were expected back, as she said to him "she did not wish to run the risk of being insulted by them again!"<sup>92</sup>

Kell was obsessive about his work and would think nothing of using his holidays to tour the east coast viewing possible invasion or sabotage locations and looking for suspicious foreigners. In January 1911 Major Grant was given a bicycle, a map and a list of railway bridges, tunnels and viaducts in the London area and was given the task of

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<sup>88</sup> TNA: FO 1093/28 Foreign Espionage in England, May 1909 to January 1910. Letter dated 19 January 1910.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Major Thwaites: Head of the German Section of the War Office.

<sup>91</sup> Stanley Clarke: Assistant to Kell at the Secret Service Bureau and 'M' William Melville, chief operative.

<sup>92</sup> TNA: KV 1/10 Kell's Diary, 1 June 1910 to 28 July 1911.

cycling round to these locations and noting down any foreigners that may have settled near them. Kell and Major Grant were not unique within the War Office for cycling reconnaissance holidays. Henry Wilson, then Director of Military Operations (DMO) gained notoriety for his passion for cycling holidays along the Franco-German frontier.<sup>93</sup>

All intelligence, whether letters from the public, police reports or information from other government departments entering the Bureau would require analysis, cataloguing, prioritising and following up with investigations for those deemed to represent the highest security risks. Not much has changed in one hundred years of counter-espionage work, as Stella Rimington, the Director General of MI5 between 1992 and 1996, highlights:

Counter-espionage work is not a glamorous business, however it has been presented by the spy-story writers. It is hard work. It is all about painstaking and rigorous analysis, the detailed following up snippets of information and perseverance in the face of disappointment. A bit of luck helps of course.<sup>94</sup>

Hundreds of letters and reports made their way to the Secret Service Bureau, of which only a mere fraction could be investigated due to stretched resources. Kell details two obstacles in his progress report for October 1910:

- (1) Lack of funds, and consequently an insufficient staff.
- (2) Inefficiency of the present legislation.<sup>95</sup>

War Office supplementary estimates of Secret Service expenditure for the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1911 show that Kell's team included an assistant, two officers and a clerk. This amounted to a quarterly salaries bill of £506. On top of this were travelling and office expenses,<sup>96</sup> which meant that the total bill for counter espionage work in the United Kingdom in the first quarter of 1911 came to £607.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> K Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier* (Oxford, 2008), p.91.

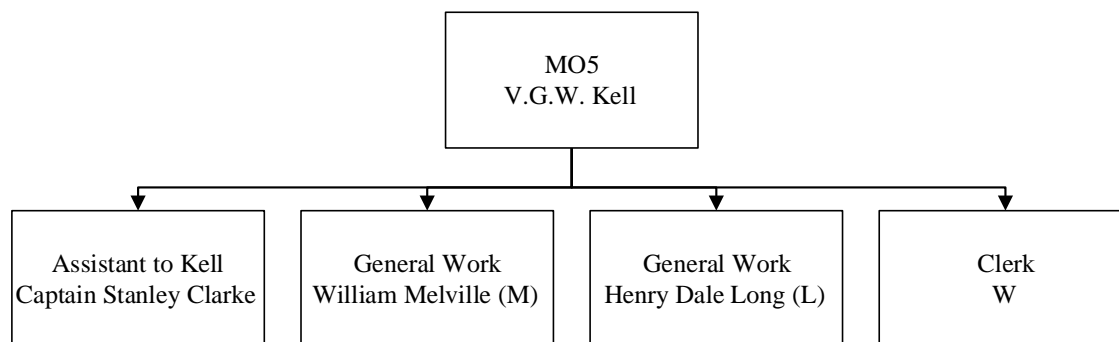
<sup>94</sup> S Rimington, *Open Secret, The Autobiography of The Former Director-General of MI5*. (London, 2001), p.117.

<sup>95</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914: (2) April 1910 to October 1910.

<sup>96</sup> The Bureau relocated to 3 Paper Buildings, Temple, London, 21 February 1911.

<sup>97</sup> TNA: FO 1093/29 Secret Service Expenditure and Estimates, January 1908 to December 1914. War Office, Supplementary Estimates of S.S. Expenditure for Quarter ending 31 March 1911.

Figure 2. Structure of MO5 (counter-espionage UK) in January 1911<sup>1</sup>



As work continued to complete the unofficial register of aliens in Britain, by May 1911 all Chief Constables of England and Wales had been personally approached by the Bureau. The Alien Returns form that Kell had started to distribute back in November 1910 had already paid dividends as information had been received from Chief Constables all-round the country including: Durham, Essex, N Riding, Kent, Lincolnshire, E Sussex, Norfolk, W Sussex, E Suffolk, Hampshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight, Shropshire and Buckingham. This translated into the details of 4,500 aliens being entered on the register and the typing of 3,755 cards for the Bureau's card index.<sup>2</sup>

At a meeting with Sir Edward Troup on 19 January 1911, Kell discussed the idea of gaining legal status for the register of aliens and the introduction of compulsory registration.

I told Sir Edward that although these [Alien] returns were of the greatest assistance to us, our real difficulty still remained unsolved, viz: that it was impossible to get the names of Aliens in the large cities and boroughs; and that only some sort of compulsory legislation would enable us to deal effectively with that side of the question. He said that so far Mr Churchill was not in favour of any compulsory registration.<sup>3</sup>

The Home Office's view at the time probably reflected that of the country at large. The period of public spy mania had peaked in the summer of 1909 and in 1911 there would not have been large-scale government support for compulsory registration, even if intelligence coming from the Bureau thought it necessary. Such legislation may have in fact re-ignited panic in the newspapers and public. The country was not yet ready for such drastic measures. What the diary entry highlights is that although Kell had the ear

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914.

<sup>3</sup> TNA: KV 1/10 Kell's diary: 1 June 1910 to 28 July 1911.

of the Home Office (at that time the Alien Sub-Committee were starting to think about the legal process of alien restriction) not all his recommendations were acted upon.

In a meeting at the Foreign Office on 7 May 1913, Kell was asked by Sir Arthur Nicolson how work was progressing. Kell revealed how recently collected population data was being used by the Bureau to complete the register: ‘The registration of aliens in large cities presented many difficulties, but that much help was being obtained from a close examination of the census returns of 1911.’<sup>4</sup> The Census had been carried out between 2 and 3 April 1911 and revealed the population of the United Kingdom to be 45,216,665. Where individuals had been born outside the United Kingdom, the census asked whether they were residents or visitors to the country.<sup>5</sup> Data in the census assisted the Bureau to build up a picture of enemy alien and naturalised British population clusters around Britain and made the task of compiling the unofficial register of aliens less resource intensive.

Table 1. Numbers of enemy aliens resident in England and Wales, Census 1911.<sup>6</sup>

All ages	Enemy aliens			Naturalised British		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Austrians/ Hungarians	9,365	4,857	14,222	918	477	1,395
Germans	32,421	18,742	51,163	4,530	1,912	6,442
Turks	1,632	758	2,390	253	101	354
Total enemy aliens	43,418	24,357	67,775	5,701	2,490	8,191
Grand total	75,966					

<sup>4</sup> TNA: FO 1093/25 Secret Service Bureau: Minutes of Meeting 7 May 1913.

<sup>5</sup> Census of 1911: Preliminary Report to the Right Honourable John Burns M.P from the Census Office, 10 June 1911.  
[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/chap\\_page.jsp?t\\_id=SRC\\_P&c\\_id=2&cpub\\_id=EW1911PRE&show=ALL](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/chap_page.jsp?t_id=SRC_P&c_id=2&cpub_id=EW1911PRE&show=ALL). 18 February 2008.

<sup>6</sup> TNA: KV 1/65 Control of Aliens in the United Kingdom; England and Wales Resident Alien Enemy figures, 1911 Census. [Report compiled in 1914-1915].

Table 2. Number of male enemy aliens of military age resident in England and Wales,  
Census 1911.<sup>1</sup>

	Austrians/ Hungarians	Germans	Turks	Total
Males aged 15-45	7,679	25,158	1,399	34,236

The Census statistics add an interesting perspective. The population in England and Wales in 1911 was 36,075,269 and the figure, in the table from the Secret Service Bureau files for German alien enemies in the country are given as 51,163. Therefore the percentage at large in England and Wales of German alien enemies made up just 0.14% of the total population. The number of German men in the country of army service age was 25,158 which is a far cry from the numbers quoted by Sir John Barlow in Parliament, back in 1909, for a German reserve army in waiting.

Panayi's work in this area has shown that almost half the German population in England and Wales was located in London. The next largest German alien communities were around London in the south east and in the big towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire.<sup>2</sup> Most of the areas the Bureau received returns from Chief Constables up to and including 1911 were not from the major centres of German communities.

Review meetings on the progress of the Secret Service Bureau were held at the Foreign Office twice a year. These meetings were where Kell's six-monthly progress reports were discussed, and sometimes Kell and Cumming were summoned to give short statements. The meetings normally included Foreign Office, Military and Naval representation.<sup>3</sup> What becomes clear from the series of meetings between 1911 and 1913 is that; War Office representatives championed Kell's corner; the Admiralty representative championed Cumming's corner; and the Foreign Office held the Bureau's purse strings. At the end of the first meeting it is noted that financial decisions for a budget of £500 would have to be made by Sir Edward Grey the Foreign Secretary. Sir

<sup>1</sup> TNA: KV1/65: Control of Aliens in the United Kingdom, Volume II, 1914 – 1915: England and Wales Alien Enemy figures for reference,

<sup>2</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, pp.14-17.

<sup>3</sup> TNA: FO 1093/25 Secret Service Bureau: Minutes of Meeting 23 May 1911. At the first meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1911 were Sir Arthur Nicolson (Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office) and Ronald Charles Lindsay (Private Secretary to Sir Edward Grey) represented the Foreign Office, Rear Admiral Alexander Bethell (Director of Naval Intelligence) and William Graham Greene (Secretary of the Admiralty) represented the Admiralty and Brigadier General H H Wilson (Director of Military Operations) and Lieut-Colonel Macdonogh (Head of MO5 at the War Office) represented the War Office.



Arthur Nicolson at the Foreign Office was also known to be a hard-line anti-German, therefore the success of the Bureau in proving German activity promoted his standing in government circles.<sup>4</sup> The minutes of the meetings show that this was the forum for Kell to plead for more resources to staff the Bureau and more money to pay his staff. It was also a place to showcase work in progress and achievements made in person, if he was summoned to the meetings.

By November 1911 the report to the Foreign Office review meeting highlighted that the activities of the Bureau had stepped up a gear. Since the last meeting, the Official Secrets Act had been amended in law which had 'greatly facilitated' the work of counter-espionage.<sup>5</sup> In the previous six months over 60 cases had been investigated.

The Bureau was moving away from merely compiling the unofficial register of aliens and random investigations. Returns were still flooding in with information received from Chief Constables in twenty-nine counties and thirteen more counties in hand. However, now a list of suspects had been drawn up from the register of aliens who were to be kept under general observation and updates on these suspects were to be given every three months. Kell had managed to gain the co-operation of seventeen Chief Constables of coast counties and issued the list of suspects so they could report back with any updates.<sup>6</sup>

Fresh from his cycling tour, Major Grant's information of aliens living near London railway structures had been incorporated into a map showing all vulnerable points in England and Wales. This showed the numbers of Germans and Austrians residing within the vicinity of these vulnerable points.

The register had been enlarged to include information on aliens employed in government establishments under the Admiralty. Regular reports were received on arrivals, departures and change of address of aliens in eight coastal counties. Work was underway to investigate not just individuals, but also the communities and German institutions they belonged to. This included eighteen German clubs in London; German

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<sup>4</sup> Gooch, *The Prospect of War*, p.127.

<sup>5</sup> An Act to re-enact the Official Secrets Act 1889 with Amendments was given Royal Assent on 22 August 1911.

<sup>6</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914: (4) Report on the work done by the Counter-Espionage section of the Secret Service Bureau from for the six months ending 22 November 1911.

miners in Kent; a German worked colliery near Port Talbot; and German Zinc-workers in West Hartlepool.

The data from all the various investigations and alien returns from Chief Constables was now being analysed and used to inform the wider government community, as evidenced by the introduction of suspect lists and mapping techniques. Members at the Foreign Office Review meeting were impressed by the Bureau's progress:

Sir Arthur Nicolson, Rear Admiral Bethell and Brigadier-General Wilson concurring, expressed his satisfaction at the excellent work that was being done by both branches of the Bureau.<sup>7</sup>

A reason for the increased activity and output from the Bureau during the second half of 1911 may have been a reaction to greater German and French activity in North Africa.

The second Moroccan crisis took place during the summer months of 1911 when the French sent an expedition to occupy Fez. Germany believed she had economic interests in the area and sought compensations in the Congo in exchange for a French protectorate in Morocco. On 1 July 1911, the German Imperial navy sent the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir to protect German interests. This alarmed both France and Britain and sent fear through the rest of Europe. Churchill, writing in 1923 with the view of hindsight, pointed out: 'Great Britain, having consulted the atlas, began to wonder what bearing a German naval base on the Atlantic coast of Africa would have upon her maritime security.'<sup>8</sup> The Agadir crisis ended with the Treaty of Fez in November 1911. Asquith's summing up of events showed just how unstable European peace had been during the crisis: 'War had been escaped over this business: no one could say, or can say now, how narrowly.'<sup>9</sup>

A letter from Churchill to Lloyd George highlighted how intelligence from the Secret Service Bureau informed ministers of the wider implications of the Agadir crisis.

Capt Kell of the WO secret service has reported to us this afternoon that the price of flour has risen today by 6/- on large German purchases in 'floating bottoms' otherwise destined for this country. He reported two days ago that one small firm

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<sup>7</sup> TNA: FO 1093/25 Secret Service Bureau: Minutes of the proceeding of a meeting held at the Foreign Office on 23 November 1911. [The Earl of Onslow (Richard, William, Alan, Onslow 5<sup>th</sup> Earl) had replaced Hon. R.C. Lindsay, M.V.O. at the second meeting. Onslow was the assistant private secretary to Edward Grey.

<sup>8</sup> Churchill, op. cit., p.29.

<sup>9</sup> Asquith, *The Genesis of the War*, p.95.

of the name of Schultz purchased as much as 30,000 bags and refused to resell at a higher price. I send you this for what it is worth.<sup>10</sup>

It is difficult to work out whether Churchill was being alarmist or gung ho in his letter, but he is name checking his sources of the intelligence to add gravitas. A second letter from Churchill the next day shows how quickly intelligence changes and is constantly reinterpreted as new information arrives.

The enclosed (from a British officer of German origin) is interesting. The flour news was all wrong. There has been a rise but it is not significant specially of anything except bad harvest in Europe & elsewhere.

The German naval reservists in England have received special summonses to be ready to return the moment mobilisation is ordered.<sup>11</sup>

The legacy of the Agadir Crisis was to give the intelligence reports of the Secret Service Bureau a wider circulation across government departments and the introduction of 'the observation alien suspect list' to be used in the event of war.

The next documented review meeting at the Foreign Office took place a year later in November 1912 and this may suggest that the Bureau's probationary period had come to an end. In September 1912 the Bureau had moved to the third floor of Watergate House, York Buildings, Adelphi, London, and had been joined by Captain Eric Holt-Wilson and Captain Reginald Drake.<sup>12</sup> Drake led the investigations of suspected espionage and Wilson and Lawrence sorted and filed the information being created by the unofficial register of aliens.

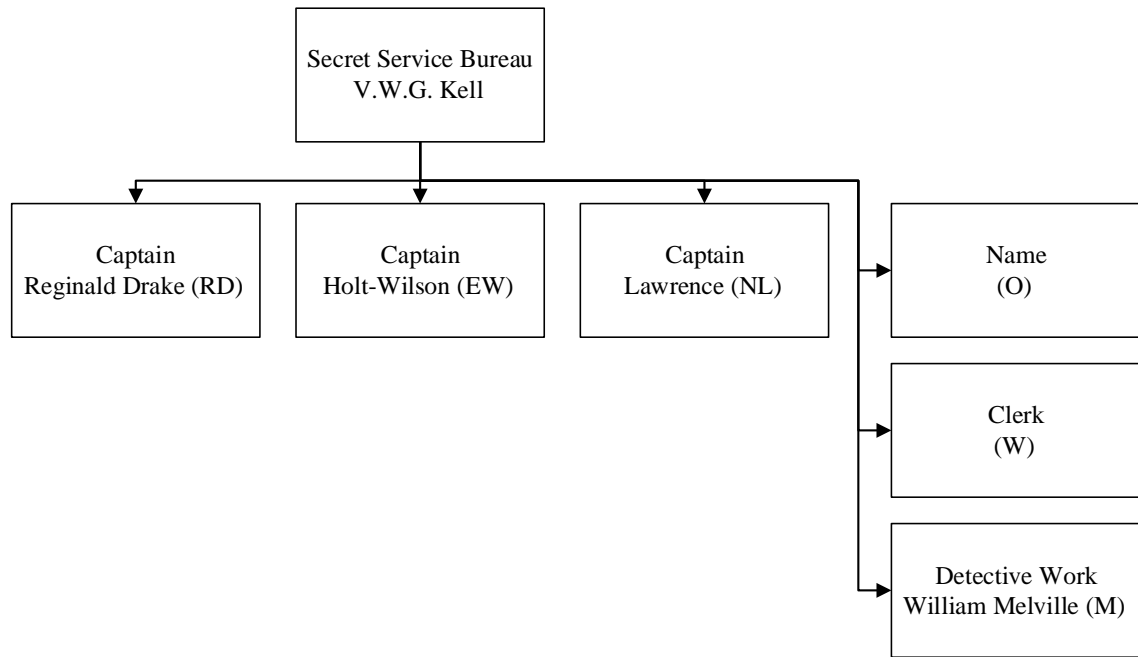
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<sup>10</sup> R Churchill (ed), *op. cit.*, pp.1120–1121. [Letter dated 4 September 1911 from Churchill at the Home Office to Lloyd George then Chancellor of the Exchequer.]

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> TNA: KV 1/49: 'H' Branch Report: The organisation and Administration of M.I.5.

Figure 3. Structure of Secret Service Bureau in January 1913.<sup>1</sup>



Even with two new assistants Kell needed more resources to keep abreast of all the information coming into the Bureau.

Lieut-Colonel Macdonogh, in the absence of Genl Wilson, gave a short summary of the work done by K's bureau. He stated that the work was increasing rapidly and that it would be necessary, if it were to be dealt with, that an additional officer should be appointed. Sir Arthur Nicolson then assented that a third assistant to K should be appointed with a 5 year guarantee of employment, subject to discharge for misconduct or inefficiency at a salary of £400 per annum, on the understanding that the approved estimates for 1912-13 should not be exceeded.<sup>2</sup>

This struggle for extra resources and budget would be a recurring theme of the review meetings held at the Foreign Office between 1911 and 1913.

Since the amendments to the Official Secrets Act in August 1911, four men of German nationality had been brought to trial and convicted under the Act. The numbers of investigated cases of espionage had risen to 240 in the previous 11 months.<sup>3</sup> Kell had also extended the unofficial register of Aliens into Scotland. Reports were now coming into the Bureau from 36 Chief Constables' counties; not just alien returns but also

<sup>1</sup> TNA: FO 1093/29 Secret Service Expenditure and Estimates, January 1908 to December 1914. War Office, Supplementary Estimates of S.S. Expenditure for Quarter ending 31 January 1913. And Cook, op. cit., p.245.

<sup>2</sup> TNA: FO 1093/25 Secret Service Bureau: Minutes of a meeting held at the Foreign Office, on 8 November, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> TNA: KV 1/9: Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909-1914: (4) Report on Counter Espionage from December 1911 to 31 July 1912. Case 30 Grosse Heinrich, Case 29 Graves, Armgaard Karl, Case 28 "A" and Case 31 "B". (5) Progress Report from 22 November 1911 to 30 October 1912.

information on any foreign communities and factories in their areas. Even the list of suspects had evolved into something more powerful to be used on the outbreak of war.

A list of persons whom should be; (a) Arrested and detained; (b) Searched; and (c) carefully watched has been prepared and is kept up to date, ready for instant despatch to Chief Constables in the event of a national emergency.<sup>4</sup>

The last documented review meeting held at the Foreign Office took place in May 1913. At the meeting Sir Arthur Nicolson asked Kell how work was progressing: 'K [Kell] replied that there were now over 22,000 foreigners on his register and that he had received great assistance from Chief Constables.'<sup>5</sup> In fact the register of aliens had grown to 21,397, and this included the details of some 5,241 Germans and Austrians. The number of those registered had doubled since the end of January 1913, when the register contained 10,320 names, of which 3,574 were Germans and Austrians.<sup>6</sup> Complete returns had been received for all resident aliens in Ireland, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Exeter.<sup>7</sup>

The 1911 census data revealed that there were approximately 51,000 German aliens living in Britain and yet the alien returns system had only captured the details of some 5,000 people. By October 1913 the draft legislation, worked on in cooperation by the Bureau and the Alien Sub-committee of the CID, was ready to be rolled out in the event of war.<sup>8</sup> On the outbreak of war the draft Alien Restriction Bill would be made law and this would compel the missing German and Austrian aliens to register with their local police stations:

The Counties for which Alien Statistics have not been prepared are, in general, inland ones, and as regards large cities and Boroughs no attempt is at present made to get statistics from, or to maintain complete registers of aliens for those which lie outside the Prohibited Areas, as defined in the Draft Order in Council of the 'Alien Restriction Bill, War'.<sup>9</sup>

The recognition for all the work Kell and his Bureau had done in compiling and reporting on the register of aliens came in March 1914 (up to this point Kell was in touch with the Chief Constables of 72 counties and 44 boroughs, with returns compiled from

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. (5) Progress Report from 22 November 1911 to 30 October 1912.

<sup>5</sup> TNA: FO 1093/25: Secret Service Bureau: Minutes of a meeting held at the Foreign Office on 7 May 1913.

<sup>6</sup> TNA: KV 1/9: Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914: (8) Report on the work of the Bureau since the last report November 1912. 9 April 1913.

<sup>7</sup> TNA: KV 1/49: 'H' Branch Report; The Organisation and Administration of MI5

<sup>8</sup> Explored in chapter 4 The Secret Service Bureau's role in developing enemy alien legislation 1909–1918.

<sup>9</sup> TN: KV 1/9: Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914: (10) Report on the Secret Service Bureau (Counter-Espionage Bureau) April to October 1913.

54 counties and 41 boroughs).<sup>10</sup> At a meeting of the CID in Whitehall Gardens, Kell and his assistant Captain Holt-Wilson were invited to give a demonstration on the work and records of the Secret Service Bureau. The meeting included the Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, and representation from the War Office, Admiralty, Home Office and Colonial Office.<sup>11</sup> Captain Holt-Wilson noted this event in his journal for 3 March 1914 by simply listing those present and stating: 'Introduced and showed system'.<sup>12</sup> Expectant committee members were shown the component parts of the unofficial register of aliens. These included: the alien cards that made up the vast index; specimen dossiers; specimen blue and white suspect lists; place and subject index cards and the specimen Alien Register for the county of Dorset.<sup>13</sup> They were also shown documents and investigation records relating to the case of Adolf Fredrick Schroeder, who had been found in possession of classified documents. His trial took place just a month later in April 1914.<sup>14</sup>

Now, only four years since the birth of the Secret Service Bureau, Kell had the ear of the Prime Minister. Intelligence gathered by his Bureau through the unofficial register of aliens in the British Isles had reached the desk of Herbert Asquith. Reviewing the origins of war, in 1923, Asquith even mentioned the birth of the Secret Service as a part of a new stage in the task of preparing for war.

Meanwhile, all sorts of complementary and subsidiary investigations had taken place. A counter-espionage bureau had been set up in the War Office. The questions of press censorship, postal censorship, and the treatment of aliens, started in 1909, dragged on in seemingly interminable discussions which were completed between 1912 and 1914.<sup>15</sup>

The after effects of the Curragh mutiny in Ireland at the end of March 1914 also brought Asquith closer to the Secret Service Bureau. With the resignation of John Seely as Secretary of State for War, Asquith himself took over the War Office.<sup>16</sup> As part of these new ministerial responsibilities, Asquith would have received reports directly from Secret Service Bureau.

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<sup>10</sup> TNA: KV 1/49: 'H' Branch Report: The Organisation and administration of MI5, section 1 Origin and early growth. Paragraph 12. (Report written 1921.)

<sup>11</sup> The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister. Also in attendance, the Secretary of State for War, Colonel John Seely, First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for the Home Office, Reginald McKenna, Colonial Secretary, Lewis Harcourt, Lord Privy Seal, Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes (the Marquess of Crewe) and Secretary of the CID Maurice Hankey.

<sup>12</sup> Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives: Papers of Sir Eric Edward Boketon Holt-Wilson. Reference GBR/0012/MS Add.9794/4. Diary of EHW.

<sup>13</sup> TNA: KV 1/6: Report of the meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, 3 March, 1914.

<sup>14</sup> Schroeder's trial took place on 4 April 1914 at the Central Criminal Court. He was sentenced to 6 years hard labour. Details of the case are covered in: T Boghardt, *Spies of the Kaiser* (Oxford 2004), pp.67-69.

<sup>15</sup> Asquith, 'The Genesis', p.117.

<sup>16</sup> John Edward Bernard Seely: Liberal politician and Secretary of State at the War Office 1912-1914.

The last progress report from the Secret Service Bureau before the outbreak of war was compiled in April 1914. Of the 28,820 aliens listed on the register approximately 11,100 were of German or Austrian descent. Interestingly the report also specifies the numbers now working at the Bureau, who were keeping the alien register updated and were ready to roll out compulsory registration in the event of war. Under Kell were three assistant directors, one chief detective, two detectives, and one chief clerk, two clerks / typists and four temporary staff consisting of indexers, telephonists, and shorthand typists. The War Office estimates of Secret Service expenditure for the period April 1913 to March 1914 was £4,560.<sup>17</sup>

Completing the unofficial register of aliens had certainly created its own bureaucracy, turning a team of three into an office of fourteen and had seen the costs of the Bureau double in just four years.

Table 3. Resident aliens and numbers on the special war list in 1913 and 1914.<sup>18</sup>

Resident Aliens	Number registered	Under special report	Already on special war list
October 1913	25,161	270	208
April 1914	28,820	244	211

Included in the April 1914 report are the numbers on a special war list. This special war list was continually updated and by the outbreak of war had been divided into four categories with two hundred and forty-seven enemy alien individuals named. List one contained the names of eleven persons already arrested as foreign agents and in the process of being prosecuted. List two held the details of twenty-five people arrested upon the outbreak of war and reported to the War Office. List three gave the details of fifty-six enemy aliens likely to be a danger to national security and had been named to the police to find and search. On the final list, list four, were one hundred and fifty-five persons who had been named to the police and selected for special observation.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> TNA: FO 1093/29 January 1908 to December 1914 Secret Service: Expenditure and Estimates: War Office: Estimates of S.S. Expenditure from 1 April 1913 to 31 March 1914 (dated 19 February 1913).

<sup>18</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 Kell's Bureau's six-monthly progress reports 1909–1914: (11) Report on Intelligence Police Service, November 1913 to April 1914.

<sup>19</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 List of special Aliens, 15 August 1914.

By the 5 August 1914, within 24 hours of the declaration of war, the unofficial register of aliens was enshrined by Parliament in the Aliens Restriction Act and suspected spies on the special war list had been searched or arrested.

The archives and files released to the National Archives are all from Kell's section of the Bureau and consequently only give the War Office view of events during those early days. However these early records of the Secret Service Bureau are quite telling about how the War Office and Admiralty relationship quickly disintegrated into non co-operation.

What has survived is a letter from Rear-Admiral Alexander Bethell to Mansfield Cumming, dated 10 August, 1909. The original letter now hangs in the director general's office at the Intelligence service, MI6. Bethell had been given the job of finding a suitable naval man to head the foreign section of the Secret Service Bureau.

My dear Mansfield Cumming. Boom Defence must be getting a bit stale with you and the recent experiments with Ferret rather discounts yours at Southampton. You may therefore perhaps like a new billet. If so I have something good I can offer you and if you would like to come and see me on Thursday about noon I will tell you what it is.<sup>20</sup>

However, at the meeting which took place to consider the general arrangements in establishing the Bureau and the appointment of Cumming and Kell, the role Rear-Admiral Bethell played is curiously absent.<sup>21</sup> Captain Temple is sent in his place to represent the Naval Intelligence Department. This could be interpreted as a snub on the part of the Admiralty or merely a diary clash. However, its consequence was to make the meeting War Office heavy, with three representatives against the Admiralty's lone champion.

By October 1909, Cumming had realised he was the junior partner in the Secret Service Bureau and was not in the full confidence of the War Office. He disclosed his fears in a letter to Bethell on 20 October.

There is no getting over the fact that up to the present I have been put on one side in favour of my colleague, and that if this attitude is maintained I shall have to take a very second place in a department and shall become in all practical respects subordinate to him as regards my relations with my superior officers. This is quite contrary to what I understood when the appointment was mentioned to me and I do not think it would prove a good plan, nor tend to the success of the work.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The Bethell letter: The recruitment of Mansfield Cumming, the first Chief of SIS. <http://www.mi6.gov.uk/output/Page557.html>. 17 February 2008.

<sup>21</sup> TNA: KV 1/3 Memorandum re Formation of a S.S. Bureau, 26 August 1909.

<sup>22</sup> Judd, op. cit., p.108.



On 9 November 1909, a CID initiative to bring the War Office and Admiralty closer together strategically failed. The duties and responsibilities for the Bureau were divided into two parts: espionage and counter-espionage in the UK went to Kell and the War Office, while espionage and counter-espionage abroad went to Cumming and the Admiralty.

It is interesting that the birth of the Secret Service Bureau and its early adopters' motivations are bound up in the much larger continental military strategy debate that persisted between 1904 and 1914. As Philpott notes, there was a British military token commitment to stand along-side France, but an absence of any political commitment to the French.<sup>23</sup> With this in mind, could the establishment of the Bureau have been a vehicle for Francophiles to raise illusory dangers of German activity within Britain to gain the political commitment to a continental strategy? The majority of individuals behind the Bureau's inception, and who continued to champion it, had heavy Francophile leaning. Sir Arthur Nicolson, permanent under-secretary to Edward Grey at the Foreign Office was known to be anti-German. The Directors of Military Operations, Grierson 1904-1906 and Wilson from 1910 were loud Francophiles. Henry Wilson and Arthur Nicolson as Jeffery points out also moved in the same social circles, lived near each other and shared the same continental outlook.<sup>24</sup>

Wilson's influence filtered down to Kell. They had biennial meetings and occasionally dined together. Kell's six-monthly reports also filtered up to the DMO's desk.<sup>25</sup> The Secret Service Bureau provided Wilson with intelligence that he could use in political lobbying. Intelligence gave Wilson credibility as Jeffery explains:

One reason why Wilson (who was still only a Brigadier-general) received such flattering attention from senior politicians during the summer of 1911 was the apparent quality of the information he possessed. Politicians are often attracted by the ostensibly intriguing world of intelligence. Throughout his career Churchill, for one, found secret sources to be seductive, and we can see at one stage of the Agadir crisis how readily he responded to 'hot' intelligence provided by Henry Wilson.<sup>26</sup>

Intelligence in the right hands was a powerful calling card and for the War Office the outputs of the Secret Service Bureau helped to circulate its continental strategic thinking

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<sup>23</sup> W Philpott, 'The General Staff and Paradoxes of Continental War' in French & Holden Reid, *The British General Staff*, p.87.

<sup>24</sup> Jeffery, *Wilson*, p.88.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.100.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.99.

to wider government circles. This is what happened with the creation of the unofficial register of aliens.

The unofficial register of aliens coincided with the increasing realisation that, with France as an entente partner, war was likely to be a continental affair. Its detail, with all its sub-lists, became a blueprint to emasculate the perceived enemy threat within the United Kingdom at the outbreak of war. Accordingly, this would free the War Office to pack up its expeditionary force and head for the continent, leaving the Navy and police to undertake the home defence of Britain in the absence of compulsory conscription.

The creation of the unofficial register of aliens by the Bureau also assumed that all enemy aliens were a potential threat to domestic security in the event of war. This appears to be a pre-conceived perception from before the Bureau was established. Edmonds' reasons for changing alien legislation also harped back to precedents set in previous times of national instability rather than any concrete evidence at the time. The Bureau continued this War Office held belief. The validity of the intelligence produced by the Secret Service Bureau on the threat posed by enemy aliens at large in Britain before 1914 did not really matter. What mattered was that the perceived solution that the Bureau created allowed the War Office to carry out its war plans unimpeded. To do this the War Office needed to be at the centre of intelligence, painting and imposing its view of the world with other governmental departments. As this chapter has shown, the outputs of the Bureau created a network of influence for the War Office that reached far and wide: from Grey at the Foreign Office and Churchill at the Home Office right up to the Prime Minister in Downing Street.

Whoever was controlling the intelligence sources held the key to promoting their strategy above and beyond any rival. Unfortunately the War Office did not count on a passive Prime Minister, who deferred decisions, even when the intelligence was in front of him.<sup>27</sup> The many CID invasion sub-committee hearings under Asquith are testament to this.

It would appear that the 1907-1908 study [Invasion and home defence] had little effect on Asquith as in 1911 he was still worried about stripping the country of troops (the logical conclusion of both investigations); he allowed the whole matter to be reopened at the two War Councils on 5 and 6 August 1914, and during the war he permitted Kitchener to keep up to 80,000 soldiers in Britain in case of invasion.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> S Bates, *Asquith* (London, 2006), p.104.

<sup>28</sup> J MacKintosh, 'The Role of the Committee of Imperial Defence before 1914', *The English Historical Review*, Vol.77, No.304. (July, 1962), p.495

If the War Office's aim was to use the illusion of spying, sabotage and the enemy alien threats to either bring about conscription or reduce its role in home defence on the outbreak of war, it ultimately failed. For on the 6 August 1914, Asquith records in his *Memoires*: 'we had our usual Cabinet this morning and decided with much less demur than I expected to sanction the dispatch of the Expeditionary Force of four divisions.'<sup>29</sup> Two divisions were withheld from going to France. Michael and Eleanor Brock, editors of Asquith's letters to Venetia Stanley, suggest that Asquith's decision to withhold two divisions had more to do with preventing any wider civil disorder within Britain than the threat of invasion from Germany.<sup>30</sup> However, if the War Office's aim for the outputs of the Bureau had been to gain a political endorsement for continental strategy, then in the end the commitment was given in 1914.

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<sup>29</sup> H Asquith, *Memories and Reflections 1852–1927* (Boston, 1928), Vol II, p.31.

<sup>30</sup> M & E Brock (eds), *H.H. Asquith, Letters to Venetia Stanley* (Oxford, 1985), p.159.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Study of the Department Sections of the Secret Service Bureau dealing with enemy aliens 1914 to 1916**

This chapter examines the role of the Secret Service Bureau in relation to the enemy alien question during the first two years of the First World War. It was during this time that the Bureau found itself at the centre of government policy and decision making on enemy alien issues. The Bureau provided intelligence that was cascaded to other government departments on the threat that enemy aliens posed to the security of Great Britain and took on an advisory function to the government and police forces around the country on enemy alien policy.

When thinking about internal threats to the security of the British Isles there are three types of civilians that the Secret Service Bureau could focus upon. These are enemy aliens, deportees from war zones, and refugees, evacuees or ‘internal enemies’. As the main fighting was situated on mainland Europe, and with the sea being a natural barrier, civilian deportees from war zones were not a security risk for the Bureau. Therefore, the Bureau had to choose between focusing its limited resources on civilian enemy aliens or the internal enemies and refugees. By charting the changing bureaucratic structure and resource allocation of the Secret Service Bureau from MO5g in August 1914, to MO5 in August 1915 through to the birth of MI5 in January 1916, it is possible to understand how the threat of enemy aliens was tackled as the first priority. It is also possible to understand how the enemy alien question was being considered by government and that the government was not merely or simply responding to public pressure. What is clear, is that by 1916 the Bureau had mitigated the enemy alien threat level and moved onto dealing with internal enemies and refugees.

On Wednesday 5 August 1914, the Prime Minister stood before the House of Commons and announced: ‘Our Ambassador at Berlin received his passports at seven o'clock last evening, and since eleven o'clock last night a state of war has existed between Germany and ourselves.’<sup>1</sup> This declaration of war set in motion the peace time preparations of the CID and the Secret Service Bureau to deal with enemy alien in the United Kingdom during a time of conflict. During the same sitting of the House of Commons the Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna, introduced the Aliens Restriction Bill. McKenna explained to the House that:

One of the main objects of the Bill is to remove or restrain the movements of undesirable aliens, especially with a view to the removal or detention of spies. Information in the possession of the Government proves that cases of espionage have been frequent in recent years, and many spies have been caught and dealt with by the police. Within the last twenty-four hours no fewer than twenty-one

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 65 (1914), col. 1963-4. [05 August].

spies, or suspected spies, have been arrested in various places all over the country, chiefly in important military or naval centres, some of them long known to the authorities to be spies. The arrangements contemplated by the Order have been designed with a view to cause as little inconvenience as possible to alien friends, while leaving effective control over dangerous enemy aliens.<sup>2</sup>

The list of spies that McKenna referred to in the House of Commons had been compiled, watched and catalogued by the Secret Service Bureau under Kell.<sup>3</sup> The list from the Secret Service Bureau, called a Special War List, consisted of persons to be arrested in case of war. In the days leading up to the outbreak of war this list had been circulated to chief constables in police forces around the country, together with dossiers on the suspects to be arrested. From 3 August 1914 the police were busy in Abercynon, Barrow-in-Furness, Falmouth, London, Newcastle upon Tyne, Penarth, Portsmouth, Sheerness, Swansea and Weymouth rounding suspected spies up and taking them into custody.<sup>4</sup> The remaining suspected spies were rounded up between the 6 and 16 August 1914 in London, Leeds, Jersey and Liverpool.<sup>5</sup>

Andrew, in his authorised history of MI5, summed up the achievement of the Secret Service Bureau: ‘Never before in British history had plans been prepared for such a large number of preferably simultaneous arrests of enemy agents at diverse locations.’<sup>6</sup> However, Hennessey and Thomas in their unofficial history of MI5 take an opposite view on the co-ordinated approach taken by Kell’s Bureau and police forces to smash a German spy ring within the United Kingdom. They maintain that there was no German network to speak of in the first place and that the MI5 masterstroke of smashing organised espionage within Britain was a lie. Hennessey and Thomas even go as far to state that:

The myth of the ‘one powerful blow’ seems to have become a – perhaps – necessary ‘lie’ on the part of Kell to save his organisation from savage post-war expenditure cuts. But a lie it was.<sup>7</sup>

This line of argument has been championed by Nicholas Hiley in a 2006 ‘Intelligence and National Security’ journal article and followed up in 2010 to challenge Andrew’s

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<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 65 (1914), col. 1986. [05 August].

<sup>3</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 ‘List of special Aliens for 15 August 1914’.

<sup>4</sup> TNA: KV 1/7 ‘List 2 of persons arrested since outbreak of war – as reported to the War Office’.

<sup>5</sup> TNA: KV 1/9 ‘List of persons arrested since outbreak of war - as report to the War Office’.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.50.

<sup>7</sup> T Hennessey & C Thomas, *Spooks; The Unofficial History of MI5* (Stroud, 2009), p.39.

authorised history of MI5.<sup>8</sup> Hiley argued that different lists, compiled in the 1921 historical report, the 1931 inter-war registry reconstruction and the 2009 authorised history, purporting to include the twenty-one or twenty-two names of German agents arrested, are a complete fabrication first created by Kell in 1914. Both Andrew and Hiley agree that a number of German agents were arrested on the outbreak of war, but disagreement still reigns as to just how much of a victory this was against the German intelligence network operating in Britain.

Kell did arrest a number of German agents on the outbreak of war, but he could not consider the operation a success as they were peacetime naval agents working for the German Admiralty Staff. He remained convinced that a much larger wartime sabotage organization, created by the German General Staff, was undiscovered and still active.<sup>9</sup>

Even after the set in August 1914, the German intelligence service continued to send spies to Britain from neutral Holland throughout the war. Ruis estimates that one hundred and twenty spies were sent by the Kriegsnachrichtentellen (KNSt), based in Antwerp: 'at least nineteen were Dutch, making the Dutch the third ethnic group after the Germans themselves and German immigrants with foreign, mostly American, passports.'<sup>10</sup> This claim is backed up by the research into German sources to understand the scope of German covert operations in Britain that Thomas Boghardt published in 2004.<sup>11</sup>

Hiley infers that McKenna's announcement of the arrest of twenty-one suspected spies was a 'fabricated victory' that had a sole purpose to cement the Alien Restriction Act's passage through parliament.<sup>12</sup> Yet, on the same afternoon in the House of Lords' chamber, the Marquess of Crewe, Lord Privy Seal, Secretary of state for India and Liberal leader in the House of Lords, also mentioned the arrest of suspected spies when he set out the alien restriction bill to the assembled peers.

Within the last 24 hours upwards of 20 spies or suspected spies have been arrested in different parts of the country, mostly at important naval or military centres. A great many of these have been long known to the military and naval authorities to

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<sup>8</sup> N Hiley, 'Entering the Lists: MI5's great spy round-up of August 1914' *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.21, No.1 (2006), pp.46-70. & N Hiley, 'Re-entering the Lists: MI5's Authorized History and the August 1914 Arrests' *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.25, No.4 (August, 2010), p. 415-452.

<sup>9</sup> Hiley, 'Re-entering the Lists: MI5's Authorized History and the August 1914 Arrests', p.417.

<sup>10</sup> E Ruis, *Spynest: British and German Espionage from Neutral Holland, 1914-1918* (Stroud, 2016), p.28.

<sup>11</sup> T Boghardt, *Spies of the Kaiser: German Covert Operations in Great Britain during the First World War Era* (Oxford, 2004), p.105.

<sup>12</sup> Hiley, 'Entering the Lists: MI5's great spy round-up of August 1914', p.70.

be spies, and the authorities have, to the general advantage, kept them and their proceedings under close observation.<sup>13</sup>

Hiley fails to comment on Crewe's announcement. However, it would appear that when both McKenna and Crewe stood up in Parliament they quoted or were briefed on arrest figures that related to Kell's Special War Lists. Hiley also fails to note the language used by both McKenna and Crewe. It surely demonstrates an ever changing situation? Phrases like '*upwards of*' and '*no fewer*' offer a vague quality to the number of twenty-one quoted by McKenna and twenty quoted by Crewe. The language actual mimics the confusing nature of intelligence work that is carried out in real time. Arrest numbers offered were debate updates rather than, as Hiley believes, actual statements set in stone. Note that both McKenna and Crewe qualify their vague numbers with a 'suspect spies' label. Until arrested and interviewed, individuals were always in the first instance going to be suspects. Only through arrest and further investigation could a professional judgement be made as to the status of actual spy. Reviewing a copy of the Special War List from July 1914, names with an 'X' next to them were to be searched in war and names with 'XX' next to them were to be arrested.<sup>14</sup> Sixty-six names are marked as to be searched and twenty-eight marked as to be arrested from a total of three hundred and twenty-four.

It follows that as more individuals were searched and arrested by local police forces around the country and resulting information then processed by the Secret Service Bureau so the intelligence picture built up. In the eye of the storm on 5 August 1914, how could Kell, McKenna or Crewe know for sure? Only when the dust settled could a fuller assessment be made by the stretched bureau of seventeen members of staff as to whether the pre-war assumptions were correct. It would not be until October 1914 and an official press bureau statement that the suspected spies became 'twenty known spies'.<sup>15</sup>

The pre-war assumptions had been built upon suspects the Secret Service Bureau had been trailing for many months before the war. In fact the hub of the German intelligence in the United Kingdom had been discovered in 1911 when the chief of intelligence of the German admiralty visited one Karl Gustav Ernst, a hairdresser in Islington, London, during the Kaiser's official visit to the capital. This out-of-character visit for one of the Kaiser's entourage led the Secret Service Bureau to take an interest in

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<sup>13</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Lords 5<sup>th</sup> series vol.17 (1914), col.384-5. [05 August].

<sup>14</sup> TNA, KV 1/7, F.9-43 Name & Addresses of People (Past & Present) on S.W. List

<sup>15</sup> H Bywater & H Ferraby, *Strange Intelligence: Memoirs of Naval Secret Service* (London, 2015), p.211.



Ernst's activities. Correspondence to and from his address was intercepted by the bureau before being sent on. From the letters and movements of Ernst between 1911 and 1914, the Bureau were able to compile a list of suspects to be watched. It also gave the Bureau a valuable insight into the level of German intelligence gathering in the United Kingdom. The contacts linked to Ernst formed the intelligence for the list of suspects who were arrested during the early days of August 1914.<sup>16</sup> Ernst was brought to trial in November 1914, found guilty of espionage and sentenced to seven years hard labour. Andrew states that research into the German intelligence archives:

demonstrates that Kell's Bureau did not succeed in identifying all the German agents present in Britain at the outbreak of war. It seems, however, to have rounded up all those that mattered. There is no evidence that in the critical early weeks of the war any worth-while intelligence reached Germany from Britain.<sup>17</sup>

Hiley, on the other hand, is far from satisfied:

If Kell had scored a major victory against a functioning German spy network in August 1914, MI5 should find it easy to answer a number of simple questions in a straightforward way. When did the operation take place? How many people were arrested? Who were they? What were their names? What happened to them after arrest?<sup>18</sup>

These are questions that can never be fully answered and are possibly a red herring as intelligence gathering has never been straightforward. Hiley wants black and white answers to something that was in reality, grey and constantly in flux. Andrew states that; 'Kell's original list no longer survives.'<sup>19</sup> Consequently, historians, such as Farrer who pulled together a list of twenty-one from the records available in 1921, have had a difficult task in trying to reconstruct a linear narration of what at the time was a chaotic non-linear world. This is compounded by the fact that many of those arrested on suspicion of spying early on the war were just interned.<sup>20</sup>

In August 1914, the arrests were a reaction to intelligence reports and the suspects' links with German intelligence, rather than a cynical ploy or fabrication on Kell's part to rush the Alien Restriction Act through parliament. The government believed in the intelligence reports and Special War Lists provided and acted upon them. This shows the

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<sup>16</sup> L Sellers, *Shot in the Tower* (Barnsley, 2009), p.6.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.52.

<sup>18</sup> Hiley, 'Re-entering the Lists: MI5's Authorized History and the August 1914 Arrests', p.449.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.51.

<sup>20</sup> M Foley, *Prisoners of the British: Internees and Prisoners of War during the First World War* (Croydon, 2015), p.65.

credibility Kell had at influencing policy towards enemy aliens. The arrests, and the immediate adoption of the Alien Restriction Act in Parliament, demonstrate that whole-scale internment of enemy aliens at the outbreak of war had not been seen as practical by the Secret Service Bureau. The immediate priority had to be the neutralisation of suspected and known German spies and saboteurs in Britain.

As the debate in the House of Commons, on 5 August, continued Mr Joseph King, Liberal Member of Parliament for North Somerset, asked McKenna for some reassurances.

As one acquainted with many German subjects, some of whom have been resident in this country for many-years, and are much more British in sentiment than German, I should like some assuring words from the Home Secretary that some regard will be had for those persons.<sup>21</sup>

McKenna assured the House:

Alien enemies against whom there is no reason whatever to suppose that they are secretly engaged in operations against this country will be subjected to nothing further than registration and the provision that they may not live in the prohibited areas.<sup>22</sup>

This statement from the Home Secretary aligns with the information given on the security threat assessment made by the Secret Service Bureau. The four Special War Lists, with the names of over two hundred and thirty enemy aliens likely to be a danger to national security (which had been developed and updated since April 1914), and the introduction of the Aliens Restriction Act were seen to be adequate measures to contain an enemy alien threat. Many of the fifty-six suspects in List three and the one hundred and fifty-five persons on List four were in the early months of the war: ‘detained and transferred to military custody as enemy aliens likely to be dangerous to the safety of the realm, or as enemy reservists still liable for naval or military service.’<sup>23</sup>

On the outbreak of war Kell left the family home in Weybridge, Surrey to base himself permanently in London. Initially he slept at the Secret Service Bureau office, located at Watergate House, York Buildings in The Strand.<sup>24</sup> The Secret Service Bureau in August 1914 consisted of seventeen members of staff: seven officers and ten clerks split between two branches: Detection and Registration. However by the end of September 1914 the work of the Secret Service was split out into three Branches. The

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<sup>21</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 65 (1914), col. 1989. [05 August].

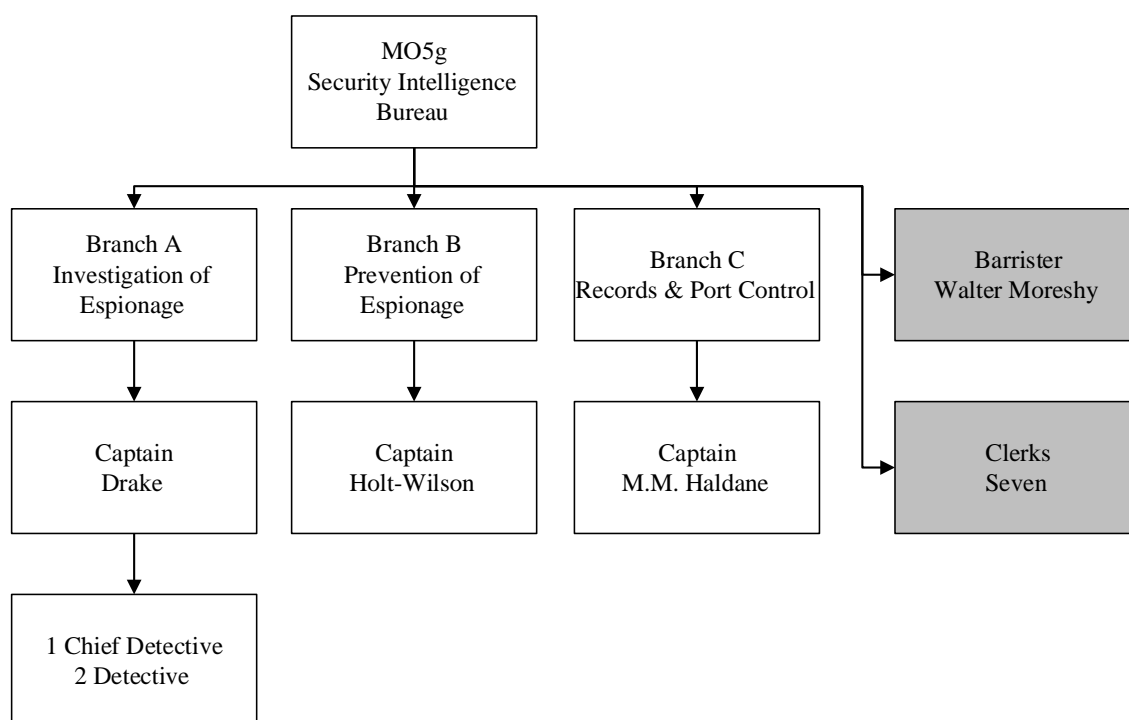
<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> TNA: KV 1/7 ‘List of Persons arrested as foreign agents, Aug 4, 1914’.

<sup>24</sup> Sellars, op. cit., p.4.

prevention and investigation of espionage which had been carried out as one function up until this point were separated into two Branches. Branch A became the ‘Detection of Espionage’ and Branch B was created around the ‘Prevention of Espionage’. The registration work of the Bureau became Branch C, the ‘Central Records Bureau and Port Control’.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 4. Structure of Secret Service Bureau, October 1914.<sup>26</sup>



Branch A, Detection of Espionage, was headed by Assistant Director, Major Reginald John Drake. Nicknamed ‘duck’, Drake is described by Kell’s wife as ‘a most able man and most successful sleuth, small hope for anyone who fell into his net’.<sup>27</sup> Before joining the Bureau, Drake had served sixteen years with The Prince of Wales North Staffordshire Regiment. During Drake’s time the Regiment saw service during the second-Boer war and was awarded South Africa 1900-1902 battle honours. Drake was made a captain of the regiment in 1901.

Branch A’s principal duties were carried out by a staff of eight section officers and four clerks. The primary purpose of Branch A was to carry out investigations of

<sup>25</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 ‘H’ Branch report. The organisation and administration of MI5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.59.

<sup>27</sup> IWM: PP/MCR/120 Reel 1. The Papers of Major General Sir Vernon Kell. Lady Kell, ‘Secret Well Kept’, p. 122.

individuals suspected of espionage, sedition or treachery within the United Kingdom and Ireland. Alongside its own case work, the branch also co-ordinated and organised espionage case traffic between government departments, the naval and military authorities, police and provincial agencies.<sup>28</sup> This meant preparing cases for individuals that had been arrested on behalf of the Bureau, but with the prosecution being continued and carried out by military or civil authorities.

Branch A also worked closely with the Censorship and Investigation Branch at the General Post Office (GPO). An arrangement cemented on 9 August 1914. The GPO division sent censored or intercepted correspondence, telegrams and communications to Branch A for examination. Once the material had been assessed by Branch A it gave the GPO direction on the disposal of the papers. The original correspondence would either then be sent on to its intended recipient, partly erased or destroyed if deemed too sensitive.<sup>29</sup>

Finally Branch A provided data on the Classification of the methods employed by espionage agents and used this information to develop recommendations for amendments to legislation and regulations. These recommendations and amendments focused upon preventing espionage, sedition, or treachery and impeding the activities of naval and military spies, and agents still at large in Britain. The branch therefore not only carried out investigations in cases of espionage, but used the experiences to build recommendations with other government departments on how legislation should be updated to meet the changing security threat.

Table 4. The work of Branch A's four sub-sections.<sup>30</sup>

Sub-section	Duties	Staff
A.1	Investigation of cases of suspected espionage, sedition or treachery in the Metropolitan & City of London Police Areas.	Two section officers
A.2	Investigation of cases of suspected espionage, sedition or treachery in the UK outside the Metropolitan & City of London Police Areas.	Three section officers
A.3	Investigation of cases of suspected espionage, sedition or treachery in Ireland.	One section officer
A.4	Examination of censored or intercepted correspondence.	Two section officers

<sup>28</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 'H' Branch report, vol. IV. The organisation and administration of MI5 Appendices.

<sup>29</sup> N West (ed), *MI5 In The Great War* (London, 2014), p.181.

<sup>30</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 'H' Branch report, vol. IV. Staff lists, 20 May 1915.

Branch B, Prevention of Espionage, was headed by Assistant Director, Major Eric F.B Holt-Wilson D.S.O. Holt-Wilson is described by Lady Kell as:

A man of almost genius for intricate organisation, his work of planning every detail with infinite foresight of what would be needed to meet the constant increase in size and importance of a department like M.I.5, contributed in large measure to its smooth running. Not only was he a most valuable officer, but he was an intensely loyal and devoted friend, and Kell found in him the support that is so important when work such as his caused him anxiety and strain.<sup>31</sup>

Holt-Wilson joined the Secret Service Bureau in 1912 aged 37, having retired from the Royal Engineers. He had seen action in South Africa during the Boer war between 1899 and 1902 with the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company. Holt-Wilson was a keen sportsman who enjoyed playing football and cricket, plus he was a regular skier. His personal diary reveals him to be a deeply religious man and it contains bible passages and prayers which had been cut out and glued in. At the back of his diary / journal is a typed list of places Holt-Wilson had visited over the years. A well-travelled man Holt-Wilson had travelled extensively across Europe, North America and spent time in Russia, Japan, India and China.

Holt-Wilson's experience in South Africa should not be underplayed and the impact it would have in his leading of Branch B. For Britain just thirteen years earlier, the second Anglo-Boer war witnessed the British army's first experiments with mass internment and deportation. Kitchener's concentration camps were set up to house Boer residents within South Africa and the Orange Free State to deprive the guerrilla Boer commandos of any local support. The scorched earth policy carried out by the British army included the internment of all Boer and African women and children into concentration camps. In his journal, Holt-Wilson notes the places in South Africa where he spent time during his Boer war service. Of the thirty-two place mentioned, twenty-two had concentration camps associated with them.<sup>32</sup> In a letter from Springfontein Orange River Colony to his father, dated 26 October 1901, Holt-Wilson comments on the conditions in one camp:

The Dutch Refugees are averaging 8 – 10 deaths a day from enteric, pneumonia, measles, etc, etc. I cannot conceive why they don't move the whole camp down to the coast, where it would be cheaper to feed them and less trouble, much

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<sup>31</sup> IWM: PP/MCR/120 Reel 1. The Papers of Major General Sir Vernon Kell. Lady Kell, 'Secret Well Kept', p. 136.

<sup>32</sup> Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives: Papers of Sir Eric Edward Boketon Holt-Wilson. Reference GBR/0012/MS Add.9794/4. Diary of EHW.

healthier for them and for us, and a great source of anxiety removed as to their spying and treacherous propensities.<sup>33</sup>

Reaction in 1901 to the South African camp conditions and high mortality rates amongst the women and children internees was a public relations disaster for the government and led Kitchener to change British policy. The placing of the women and children in the concentration camps was stopped and the government set in motion the Fawcett Commission to visit the camps. Holt-Wilson's view on British internment policy expressed in May 1902 was not focused on the camp conditions.

It must be almost without parallel, the condition of affairs we have brought about by our childish policy of collecting and tending to their women and children etc so as to enable them to carry on brigandage with only their skins at stake. No other country in the world's history has done or would do such a suicidal thing. However it is a fine proof of the power of the Empire, but I could have rather that my generation had not to bear the brunt of it execution!<sup>34</sup>

He goes on to suggest that the second Anglo-Boer war might have ended earlier if the interned women and children had not been rounded up and left to fend for themselves:

Does anyone suppose that if they had been left to the natural fate their husbands and brothers brought on them; namely to take their chances of starvation and worse evils on lonely farms in the veldt – that they would not have long compelled their men to sue for peace in an honourable manner, when they saw their hopes of a Dutch Empire in S.A. were hopelessly lost?

And worst of all the Boer himself laughs at us for pitiful fools for looking after their families in this manner – and considers it a sop to his majesty!<sup>35</sup>

With the British experiences during the Second Anglo-Boer war the lessons of interning women and children were not going to be repeated by Branch B when developing enemy alien policy in 1914. Holt-Wilson gained insight and Proctor suggests the learning crossed multiple strands of intelligence policy:

British military officials gained important insight from 1899 to 1902 into the success of civilian internment, press and postal censorship, and effective intelligence gathering, and processing during wartime.<sup>36</sup>

This learning translated into a voluntary repatriation policy for enemy alien woman in Britain during the Great War rather than the wholesale internment that was placed on male enemy aliens. It created an illusion that enemy alien women were unlikely to be a

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<sup>33</sup> C Holt-Wilson, *War Letter to T.H.W. from South Africa 1899-1902 E.H.W.* (Bristol, 1999), p.183.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.224

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> T Proctor, *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (London, 2003), p.20.

source of spy or sabotage threat. However, more importantly, the government recognised the political threat of interning women had on its international reputation. By January 1915 this repatriation policy had led to the deportation of nearly seven thousand women from Britain.<sup>37</sup>

Branch B's principal duties were carried out by a staff of six section officers and four clerks. Its primary purpose was the 'Co-ordination of the general methods of the Police, of Government Departments, and co-operation with the Allied Forces, in the application of Naval and Military Measures for the Control of Aliens and Prevention of Espionage in the United Kingdom.'<sup>38</sup> The Branch had a wide reaching remit across government departments. It was the go to authority for any questions of policy regarding counter-espionage that stemmed from both the Defence of the Realm and Aliens Restriction Acts. Branch B also wrote the draft proposals and any amendments on behalf of the military and navy to counter-espionage and control of aliens legislation.

The Branch was an important centre of records and registers that other government departments could consult. Its key repository was the Black lists and other special lists which the branch continued to keep up to date and circulate with police forces, port authorities, the Home Office, other government departments and Allies' intelligence services. Alongside this key tracking resource, other data bases of information were maintained, including a register of aliens, foreign communities and naval and military undesirables. These lists and registers were backed up with individual records of alien soldiers, sailors, police and officials and the case files of any enemy aliens permitted to reside with the prohibited areas of the United Kingdom.<sup>39</sup> The branch also maintained records relating to any appeals or applications from enemy aliens logged with government departments. These covered credentials of enemy aliens proposed for release from military internment, appeals from aliens addressed to War Office and Admiralty, and applications of enemy aliens to leave the United Kingdom'.<sup>40</sup>

Branch B's remit went wider, and was forward thinking to include issues that were starting to loom large on the horizon in September 1914. These included the investigations on behalf of the Home Office into the credentials of applicants for Naturalisation as British Subjects, as referred by the Home Office. The branch also

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 'H' Branch report, vol. IV. The organisation and administration of MI5 Appendices.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

worked with other government offices on the admission of Belgian refugees and workmen to Prohibited Areas. Finally B Branch authored official correspondence and draft official letters relating to their specialisms of measures for the control of aliens and prevention of espionage in the United Kingdom.

Table 5. The work of Branch B's five sub-sections.<sup>41</sup>

Sub-section	Duties	Staff
B.1	Alien Intelligence	One section officer
B.2	Prevention of Military Espionage	One section officer
B.3	Prevention of Naval Espionage	One section officer
B.4	Special measures for supervision and control of Belgian Refugees	Two section officers
B.5	General Duties	Four clerks

The co-ordination of general policy of government departments in dealing with aliens and questions arising out of the Defence of the Realm regulations and the Aliens Restriction Act fell to Branch B. At the centre of this was sub-section B.1. 'Alien Intelligence' which was led by Henry Cuthbert Streatfeild. Streatfeild had before joining the Bureau worked in India from 1890 to 1913. During his time in India he had been the Commissioner Tirhut (an area in the Bengal province), been presented to the King whilst at the Nepalese border during the royal visit to India in 1911 and awarded the Companion of Indian Empire (CIE) in 1913.<sup>42</sup> His civil service experience working within the Indian government gave the Bureau a wider knowledge of Imperial bureaucracy.

Branch B had a wide ranging remit and scope, but it was the subject expert on aliens in the United Kingdom. The branch was the knowledge centre for all records of enemy aliens interned and released, the records of enemy aliens permitted to reside in prohibited areas and the paper work relating to the examination of aliens' credentials passed to them by other government departments. This was backed up by further records of all aliens (whether enemy, neutral or allied) in government service, and all alien personnel working at foreign Embassies and Consulates within the United Kingdom.

These records were then analysed and compared against hard 'facts' the branch had access to, such as census reports, alien statistics, the distribution of alien populations

<sup>41</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 'H' Branch report, vol. IV. Staff lists, 20 May 1915.

<sup>42</sup> Government of India, *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India, 1914* (London, 1914), p.230.



and reports of alien cases and convictions. The results of this analysis were information reports and lists that the branch then circulated widely around government. They published the special alien and black lists that the police and port authority used to track potential spies, wrote summary reports on naturalisation of alien applications and enemy alien applications to leave the United Kingdom for the Home Office, and circulated collections of press clippings relating to articles on alien activity and policy around government.<sup>43</sup> When government ministers stood up in the House of Commons and answered questions of the numbers of enemy aliens at large, the figures quoted were sourced from the Bureau. When Official articles were released to newspapers from the Press Bureau on the issues of spies and enemy aliens the statistics came from Kell's agency. And when changes and amendments to the Alien Restriction Act were made in Parliament the recommendations for those modifications had originated from B branch.

Both sub-sections B.2 Prevention of Military Espionage and B.3 Prevention of Naval Espionage were responsible for any military or naval amendments to legislation dealing with the control of aliens. They were also responsible for checking the credentials of any alien candidates for employment within government offices, or military and naval departments, and vetted the employment of aliens involved with military and naval contractors or the manufacture of military materials.

Branch B's reach and influence into other government departments is demonstrated by Kell's and Holt-Wilson's membership of the CID Sub-Committee on the 'Treatment of Aliens in time of war'. Here they were able to meet face-to-face with officials from the Home Office, Board of Trade, Admiralty and the Board of Customs & Excise and use their influence on matters relating to enemy aliens.<sup>44</sup> Kell and Holt-Wilson were the glue between government departments with the Secret Service Bureau at the centre of the alien enemy information and policy network.

It is also interesting to note the introduction of B.4. 'Supervision & Belgian Refugees', under William M Rolph in October 1914.<sup>45</sup> The creation of this sub-branch

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<sup>43</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 'H' Branch report, vol. IV. The organisation and administration of MI5 Appendices.

<sup>44</sup> Members of the sub-committee included: The Right Hon. R. McKenna, MP, Secretary of State for Home Affairs (in the Chair); Viscount Esher, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.; Sir E Troup. K.C.B., Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs; Sir H. Llewellyn Smith, K.C.B. Permanent Secretary, Board of Trade; Admiral Sir H.B. Jackson, Admiralty; Lieutenant-Colonel G.K. Cockerill, General Staff, War Office; Mr J. Browning, I.S.O. Board of Customs and Excise and Captain M.P.A. Hankey, C.B. Secretary to the CID and Secretary to the War Council. TNA: KV1/65. Control of Aliens in the United Kingdom. Volume II. 1914 to 1915.

<sup>45</sup> William M Rolph after retiring from MI5 was found in 1940 to have volunteered to spy for Abwehr, the German intelligence organisation. He killed himself on being confronted with evidence. T Crowdy, *The Enemy Within: A History of Espionage* (Oxford, 2006), p. 249.

shows the Bureau's adaptability to changing situations. As Belgian refugees flooded in to the United Kingdom in the autumn of 1914 much of Belgium was taken by the German army so a new perceived threat emerged. This was in the form of possible German spies and saboteurs passing themselves off as Belgian refugees. The first party of 437 refugees arrived in Britain on the 6 September 1914, with up to 250,000 others escaping Belgium passing through the ports of Harwich, Tilbury and Folkestone by the end of the war.<sup>46</sup> Rolph's section worked with the War Refugees Committee and carried out investigations into the credentials of all Belgian nationals who came to Britain, and kept lists of all firms employing Belgian workmen.

By May 1915 seventy-six people were working within MO5g of which ten within Branch B had their focus directly on the issues of enemy aliens. In resources terms that related to thirteen percent dealing with processing enemy alien intelligence, shaping enemy alien policies, and then influencing other government departments to adopt the right enemy alien legislation. This does not take into account the work of Branch C which indirectly supported Branch B by collating, indexing, cataloguing and recording all its intelligence information, creating files on every individual suspect and drawing up Black Lists.

Branch C, Organisation of Intelligence Police and Central Bureau, was headed by Assistant Director, Major Maldwyn Makgil Haldane. Nicknamed 'Marmaduke' he was the nephew of Richard Viscount Haldane, former Secretary of War between 1905 and 1912. Before joining the Bureau in 1914, aged thirty-seven, Haldane had served with the Royal Scots between 1899 and 1909. Serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion he saw action in South Africa during the second Anglo-Boer war. Again like Holt-Wilson, Haldane would have had first-hand experience of the British army's internment policy and the resulting forty-five concentration camps set up across South Africa. Haldane retired from the army in 1909, to then re-join the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) at the outbreak of war.

Branch C's principle duties included the provision, maintenance and distribution of intelligence police personnel and employers, and the receipt, registration, distribution, indexing, filing, and custody of all central Bureau correspondence and records.<sup>47</sup> This activity was carried out by a staff of six section officers, seven clerks, five typing staff and thirty-four card room staff.

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<sup>46</sup> Sellers, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Table 6. The work of Branch C's five sub-sections.<sup>48</sup>

Sub-section	Duties	Staff
C.1	Drafting of official War Office correspondence	Two section officers
C.2	Indexing, filing and custody of all central Bureau correspondence and records	One section officer
C.3	Control of office procedures	One section officer
C.4	Provision, maintenance and distribution of Intelligence Police Personnel and Employees	One section officer
C.5	Legal advice	One section officer

The records of the Central Registry in Branch C had started from the Bureau's pre-war unofficial register of aliens work and by the outbreak of war claimed to have card files on over half of the enemy alien population at large in the United Kingdom. By the spring of 1917 the Central Registry (then H Branch) had grown to include over 250,000 cards and 27,000 personal files.<sup>49</sup> Miss Edith Annie Lomax worked as the section officer in C2 and lady superintendent of the card room, responsible for indexing, filing and custody of all correspondence and records. She was at the nerve centre of the Bureau, keeping intelligence records up to date, and was singled out by Lady Kell for special praise:

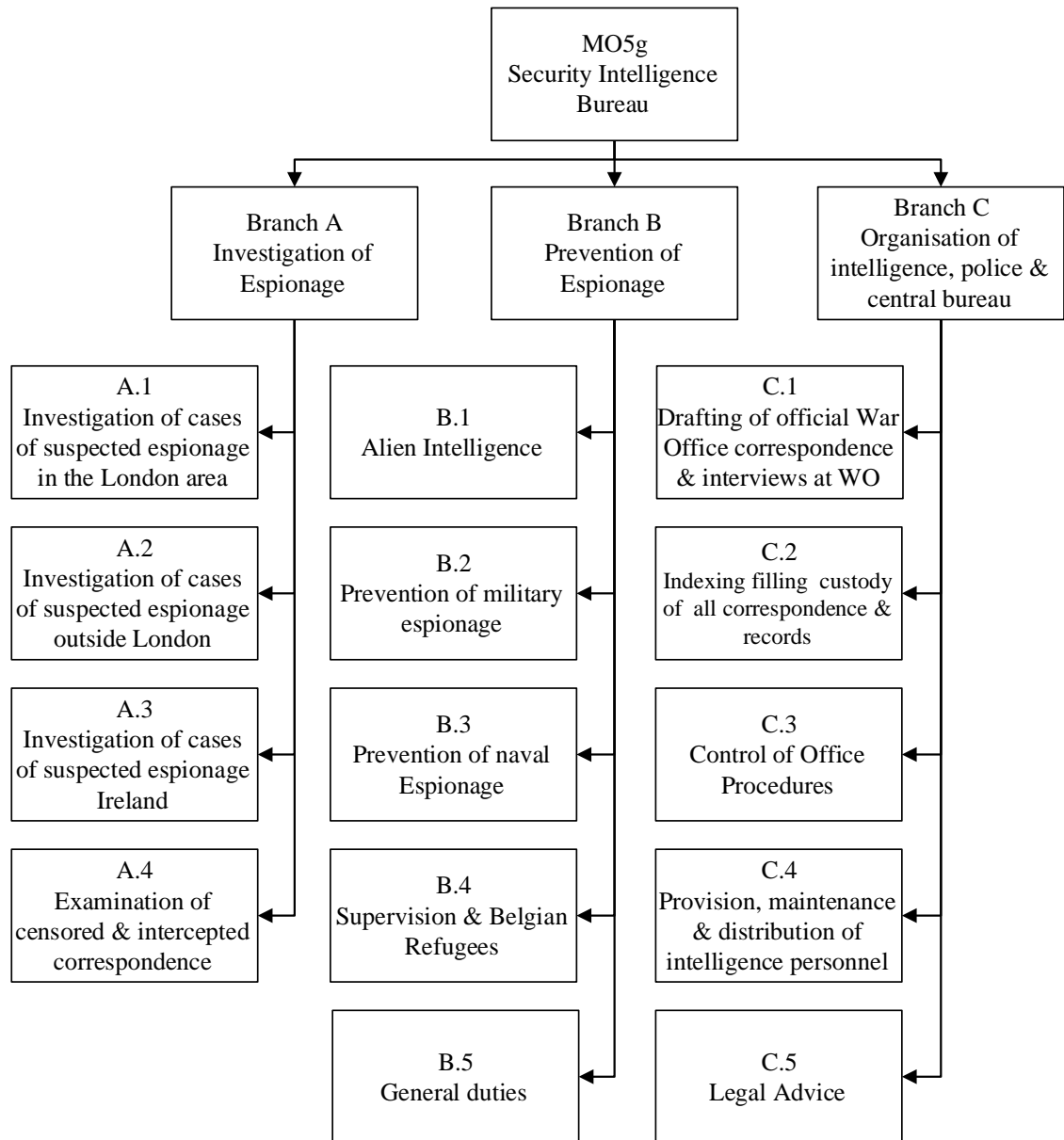
so excellent that K [Kell] could rest assured that whatever she, and those who worked with her, and under her, were asked to do, would be quickly and eagerly carried out. If there was a rush, they would gladly work all night if that would help towards the success of whatever job they had in hand. There was something personal in the ready response to what was asked of them, K had indeed the gift of inspiring those who worked for him, to give of their best.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 'H' Branch report, vol. IV. Staff lists, 20 May 1915.

<sup>49</sup> C Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.174.

<sup>50</sup> IWM: PP/MCR/120 Reel 1. The Papers of Major General Sir Vernon Kell. Lady Kell, 'Secret Well Kept', p. 148.

Figure 5. Structure of Secret Service Bureau, May 1915.<sup>51</sup>



In August 1915 MO5g reorganised to try to meet the changing needs of the internal threat to the United Kingdom. With the implementation of the Alien Restriction Act in August 1914 and the wholesale internment of all enemy alien males of military age in May 1915, the focus for enemy spies moved from the enemy aliens at large around the United Kingdom to passengers entering and leaving the country. On 11 August 1915 a new sub-division was created to deal with Port Control and MO5G was re-organised into four sub-sections and new letters were assigned under MO5

The new Branch E (MO5E), Counter Espionage, under Major Claude E. Dansey, had one section officer and 3 clerks and dealt with military policy connected with the

<sup>51</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 Staff Lists, 20 May 1915.

control of Civilian passenger traffic to and from the United Kingdom. It was then split into two sub-sections: E1, Military Permit Office, staffed by one military permit officer and three examiners; and E.2, Port Intelligence Services, staffed by six port officers.

One of the interesting duties listed for M05E was: ‘Examination of reports on agents in Scandinavia, Denmark and Holland and in belligerent territory in Europe.’<sup>52</sup> This indicates that the perceived threat from spying within the United Kingdom had moved from the enemy alien resident population (which were either under restriction orders or interned) to focus on passengers from neutral countries trying to pass through Britain.

As part of the reorganisation the three other branches were given new letter codes. M05(g) B became M05F dealing with military policy regarding the Civil population, including aliens, Aliens’ Restriction Orders, and Defence of the Realm Regulations special Intelligence duties. M05(g) A became M05G dealing with Counter Espionage. M05(g) C became M05H, and called the Secretariat of Central Bureau. It continued to keep the military records of Aliens and provide entire administrative support to the rest of the Bureau.<sup>53</sup>

The re-organisation of Branch G, Detection of Espionage, is interesting because it shows widening of the security threat in August 1915. No longer was the threat simply from spies and saboteurs hiding amongst enemy aliens. Sub-branch G.2, which investigated suspected espionage cases within the United Kingdom, widened its net to include acts of sedition amongst Indians and Egyptians in the country. G.5 Sub-branch was enlarged to cover not just investigations concerning Ireland, but also to co-ordinate cases around the Empire. Finally Sub-branch G.1 moves completely away from the investigations of espionage case to concentrate on the fomentation of discontent through strikes, general acts of sabotage and any peace propaganda.<sup>54</sup> These were not changes being brought about by press and public pressure.

What was equally impressive in November 1915 was a list the offices to which the Bureau’s intelligence outputs in the form of MO5 circulars were distributed. This distribution list included the French and Belgian intelligence services, the Criminal Investigations Department at Scotland Yard, British GHQ and Downing Street.<sup>55</sup>

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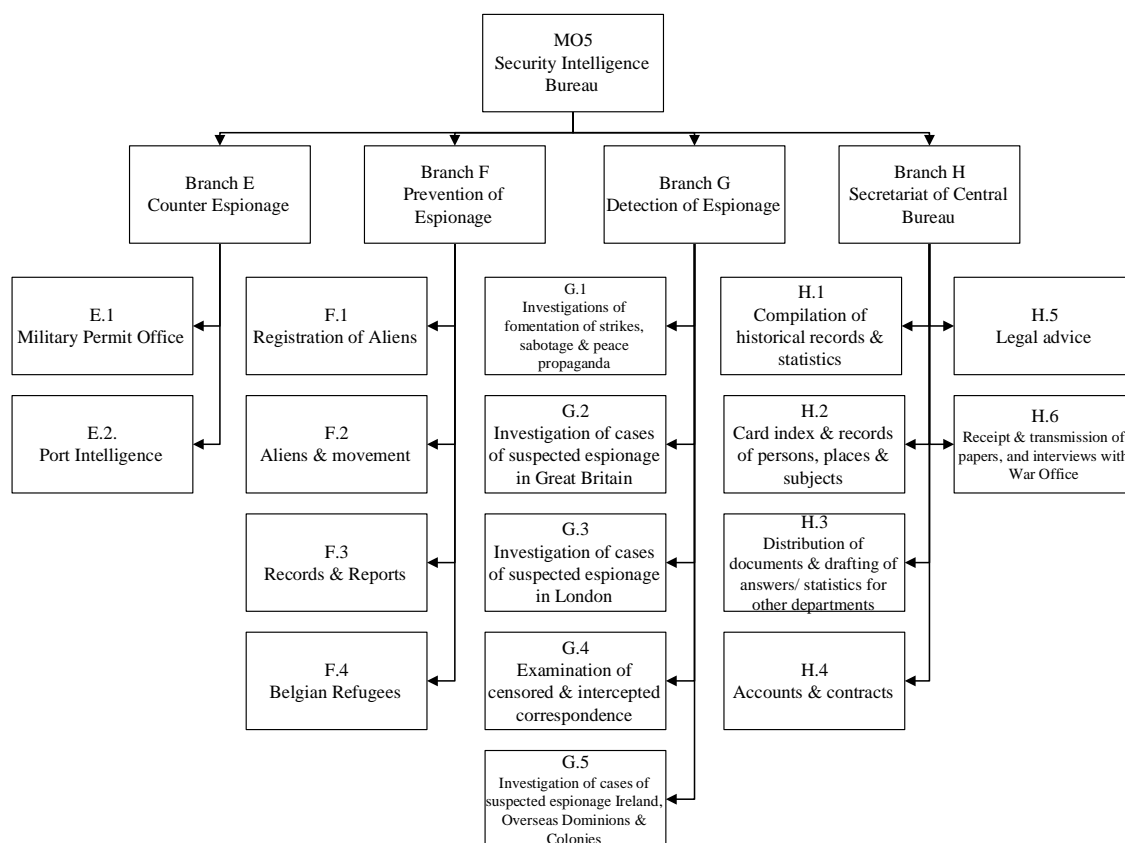
<sup>52</sup> TNA: KV 1/52 ‘H’ Branch report, vol. IV. The organisation and administration of MI5 Appendices

<sup>53</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 “H” Branch Report. The Organisation and Administration of MI5 Chapter II.

<sup>54</sup> West, op. cit., p.251.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.253.

Figure 6. Structure of the Secret Service Bureau, August 1915.<sup>56</sup>



On 3 January 1916, MO5 became MI5, a separate branch of the Military Intelligence Department and so the designation of the various branches changed to MI5 E, F, G, and H.

By 1916 most of the male enemy aliens in Britain and of military call-up age (between 17 and 45 years of age) had been rounded up and sent to internment camps across the country. This meant that the enemy alien threat, either as an uncontrolled group of spies dotted around the United Kingdom ready to signal to passing Zeppelins to send intelligence reports back to the mother country on British Military and Naval establishments or individuals prepared to take up arms in the event of a German invasion, had largely disappeared. The legislation that made this happen will be examined in chapter four, but for the Bureau it necessitated a structural change to its branches to try and adapt to the new internal threats to the security of the British Isles. These structural changes and resource re-allocation within the Bureau demonstrate the movement of the threat from the civilian enemy alien group to refugees and internal enemy civilians. Testament to this is the focus of Sub-branch G.1 onto the investigations of individuals

<sup>56</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 'H' Branch Report & KV 1/52 Staff Lists, 11 August 1915. West, op. cit., p.249-251.

behind labour strikes, and peace groups, and the widening remit of Branch G on possible causes of instability across the Empire.

The Easter rising in Dublin during April 1916 brought the threat of Irish Republicans to the forefront of British domestic security.<sup>57</sup> In January 1916, the introduction of compulsory conscription added pacificism to the ever growing list of internal threats, and the Russian revolutions of 1917 brought communism under the focus of MI5.

As the workloads and investigations increased so the pressure took its toll on the staff of the Bureau.

In K's office the strain of the work was beginning to tell on those who had been longest in the office and had very responsible jobs. Colonel Drake, the quickest witted and most successful frustrator of spies, had to take a short spell of sick leave, and many more were in need of a rest.<sup>58</sup>

The change in emphasis from 1916 also impacted upon the Bureau's ability to influence government policy, as Andrew points out:

Had German espionage remained a serious apparent threat throughout the war or Germany succeeded in launching a major sabotage campaign in Britain, Kell would have found it much easier to retain the lead domestic intelligence role. But during the second half of the war, with the government now more concerned with subversion than with espionage, it was easier for Thomson [Sir Basil Thomson, head of CID] than for Kell to gain the ear of ministers.<sup>59</sup>

While Kell's Bureau undertook all the investigation and surveillance work on suspected German spies at large, because of its secret nature it was Scotland Yard's Criminal Investigations Department under Sir Basil Thomson that landed all the glory for the arrest of possible suspects.

During the period from the outbreak of war to 1916, the bureaucratic structure of the Secret Service Bureau and the nature of the work carried out by its branches highlights the pivotal role Kell's staff had in carrying out enemy alien policy. However, more importantly the structure shows the influence the Bureau had in directing the machinery of government to implementing enemy alien policy. Policy relating to enemy alien issues is balanced and considered by Branch B rather than just being a reaction to public

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<sup>57</sup> Since the 1883 mainland Fenian bombing campaign the Metropolitan Police had established within the Criminal Investigation Department the Police Special Irish Branch to combat Fenian terrorism. Later Special Branch would work in close co-operation with the Secret Service Bureau.

<sup>58</sup> IWM: PP/MCR/120 Reel 1. The Papers of Major General Sir Vernon Kell. Lady Kell, 'Secret Well Kept', p.153.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.83.

pressure. The Bureau's structure reveals the co-ordinating role that it had on enemy alien policy, regulations and Acts of Parliament between the police, government departments, military and navy. Branch C demonstrates that the Bureau was central to supplying intelligence on enemy alien matters across government and that this information, whether right or wrong on the perceived threat, was used in the construction of legislation and formed the facts in speeches used by Ministers in Parliament.

The Prime Minister would on occasion visit Kell's office to witness progress at first hand, showing that the Bureau's influence went right to the top.

During the First War, the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith came to see the large map in the office, and he saw the extent of the work, "why this amounts to a major victory", so great had been this contribution to the successful countering of the enemy's Intelligence organisation.<sup>60</sup>

The Secret Service Bureau was at the centre of and driving the enemy alien agenda during the first two years of the war. Its structure blueprint shows that the policy and procedures created by the experts of the bureau had been rigorously tested across government departments and based upon real intelligence from field work investigations. The Bureau was under no illusion.

Contrary to popular images, intelligence services rarely work in a half-lit 'parapolitical' vacuum, cut off from the day-to-day working of overt government. They are, rather, simply instruments of policy, either of its formulation or of its implementation.<sup>61</sup>

Using Davies' intelligence cycle model for comparison it is possible to show that MI5 was not a bureaucratic structure designed just to react to the whims of the press and public opinion.<sup>62</sup> The model consists of four general sequential stages: tasking, collection, analysis and dissemination. In the first of the four stages, tasking, the intelligence information requirements and parameters are set by policy-makers. These policy-makers between 1909 and 1916 were the CID, Foreign Office, War Office and Admiralty and as consumers of the intelligence outputs set out the terms of reference for MI5. This group also included to a lesser extent the Home Office as throughout the cycle they were often the outward facing façade for MI5. The CID had set the task of understanding the extent of German spies and by association enemy aliens in Britain and

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<sup>60</sup> IWM: PP/MCR/120 Reel 1. The Papers of Major General Sir Vernon Kell. Lady Kell, 'Secret Well Kept', p.112.

<sup>61</sup> P Davies, *The British Secret Service* (Oxford, 1996), p.xx.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



the threat they posed to mainland security within the United Kingdom.

The second stage, collection, witnessed MI5 at an operational level generating the raw intelligence. This was carried out by Branch A, Detection of Espionage, through mounting its own surveillance operations and also relying upon the police and other governmental agencies physical resources. The physical surveillance was supplemented by unofficial register of enemy aliens compiled with the help of local police forces, Home Office reports, the reports from other allies' intelligence services, intercepted postal traffic and public eye-witness accounts.

Once the raw intelligence has been gathered it is compared against what is already known to be true in the stage call analysis. In the early phase of the war this assessment activity was carried out by the Branch B and assisted by Branch C. Branch C provided the facts of what was already know from their card record system to which Branch B integrated the raw intelligence in a process termed 'all-source analysis'<sup>63</sup>. The resulting new intelligence then had implications for changing threat levels, civilian groups requiring investigations, and governmental policy formation and direction going forward.

This new direction was turned in an assessed intelligence product that could be circulated back to consumers and stakeholders in the final stage called dissemination. These consumers and stakeholders were the bodies that had set out the requirements for intelligence in stage one. The outputs circulated in stage four could be updated Black list, enemy alien statistics, or new recommendations on changes to the Alien Restriction and the Defence of the Realm Acts.

The Bureau's structure and direction in the first two years of the war was based on the intelligence cycle that had been continually developed since 1909. It was an agile structure that proactively championed and co-ordinated alien enemy policy and action with a wide range of government departments. Whether those government departments had the resources spare to devote to the Branch's intelligence products, reports and recommendations on alien enemy issues shows how stretched the government was in a total war. Here Panayi is right to raise the point that no ministry or body had overarching responsibility for the internment and camp system.<sup>64</sup> Enemy alien intelligence and policy direction was not the issue. However, the implementation of MI5's recommendations had become a bottle-neck as government departments continued to work in isolation from

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, p.83.

one and other.

Sir Basil Thomson's reflected with embarrassment the newspapers cry 'Intern them all': 'My own view at the time was that we had so full a knowledge of the dangerous Germans that we should confine internment to that class and leave the innocent ones at liberty.'<sup>65</sup> This knowledge had been achieved through the thorough pre-war activity of MI5 with the help of the police and other government departments. Thomson then philosophises on the duties of an intelligence officer:

The duties of an Intelligence officer are very like those of a journalist, the difference being that in the case of the intelligence officer he tries to sift out the truth, and give it all to his superiors, whereas the journalist has first to consider what is good for the public to know, and what will contribute to the popularity of his newspaper.<sup>66</sup>

During the first two years this is exactly what MI5, through its structures and bureaucracy, gave its superiors: the truth.

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<sup>65</sup> B Thomson, *Queer People* (London, 1922), p.60.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p.275.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Study of MI5, enemy aliens and the changing domestic security priorities 1916 to 1918**

This chapter examines the role of MI5 in relation to the enemy alien question during the last two years of the First World War. It was during this period that MI5 found itself dealing with ever changing security threats within the British Isles and its Empire. Enemy alien policies and internment had been so successful by 1916 that German intelligence had to change its methods for extracting information from Britain. MI5 had challenged and neutralised the illusory threat of enemy aliens. Now the challenge for MI5 was to keep apace of the German intelligence changes, but at the same time horizon scan and predict new domestic threats that might interfere with the Country and Empire's ability to continue fighting a total war on all fronts.

During a debate in the House of Commons on Thursday 13 January 1916, William Joynson-Hicks, Conservative M.P. for Brentford asked: 'How many German and Austrian alien enemies, male and female, respectively, are now at large in the United Kingdom?' Mr Brace, the Parliamentary secretary to the Home Office, replied:

As regards males, the figures for Great Britain are: Germans, 7,449; Austrians, 5,088. I have not been able to obtain the figures for Ireland. A final census of female alien enemies has not yet been taken for the whole Kingdom, but the available records show that the number at large, excluding British-born wives, is between 10,000 and 11,000, of whom about two-thirds are Germans and one-third Austrians.<sup>1</sup>

Analysis by the newly renamed MI5 of the internment and exemptions granted to male enemy aliens of military age put the total at large on 12 January 1916 to be 7,286.

Table 7. Numbers of enemy aliens, interned, granted exemption from internment and still at large, January 1916.<sup>2</sup>

	Internments	Exemptions
German subjects	26,474	2,962
Austrian subjects	5,664	3,974
Turkish subjects	157	550
		7,486
Less		200
Total-interned	32,295	At Large 7,286

However the MI5 report does not just stop at the figures for German, Austrian and Turkish civilians in the United Kingdom. The report then went on to detail the numbers of exemptions for, so called, 'Friendly races'.

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 77 (1916), col. 1760-1. [13 August].

<sup>2</sup> TNA: KV 1/66 Control of aliens 1916-1917, Report of 12 January 1916.

Table 8. Exemptions granted to ‘friendly races’, January 1916.<sup>3</sup>

Friendly races	Exemptions
Czechs	768
Poles & Polish Jews	1,747
Persons born in Alsace Lorraine	391
Southern Slavs	113
Other friendly races	10
Total	3,029

‘Friendly races’ are defined in the report as ‘persons belonging to races who are, or are supposed to be, inclined to be friendly to the Allies’.<sup>4</sup> The report shows that the Bureau by 1916 no longer viewed the threat of German backed spies within the British Isles solely down to individuals within the enemy alien community.

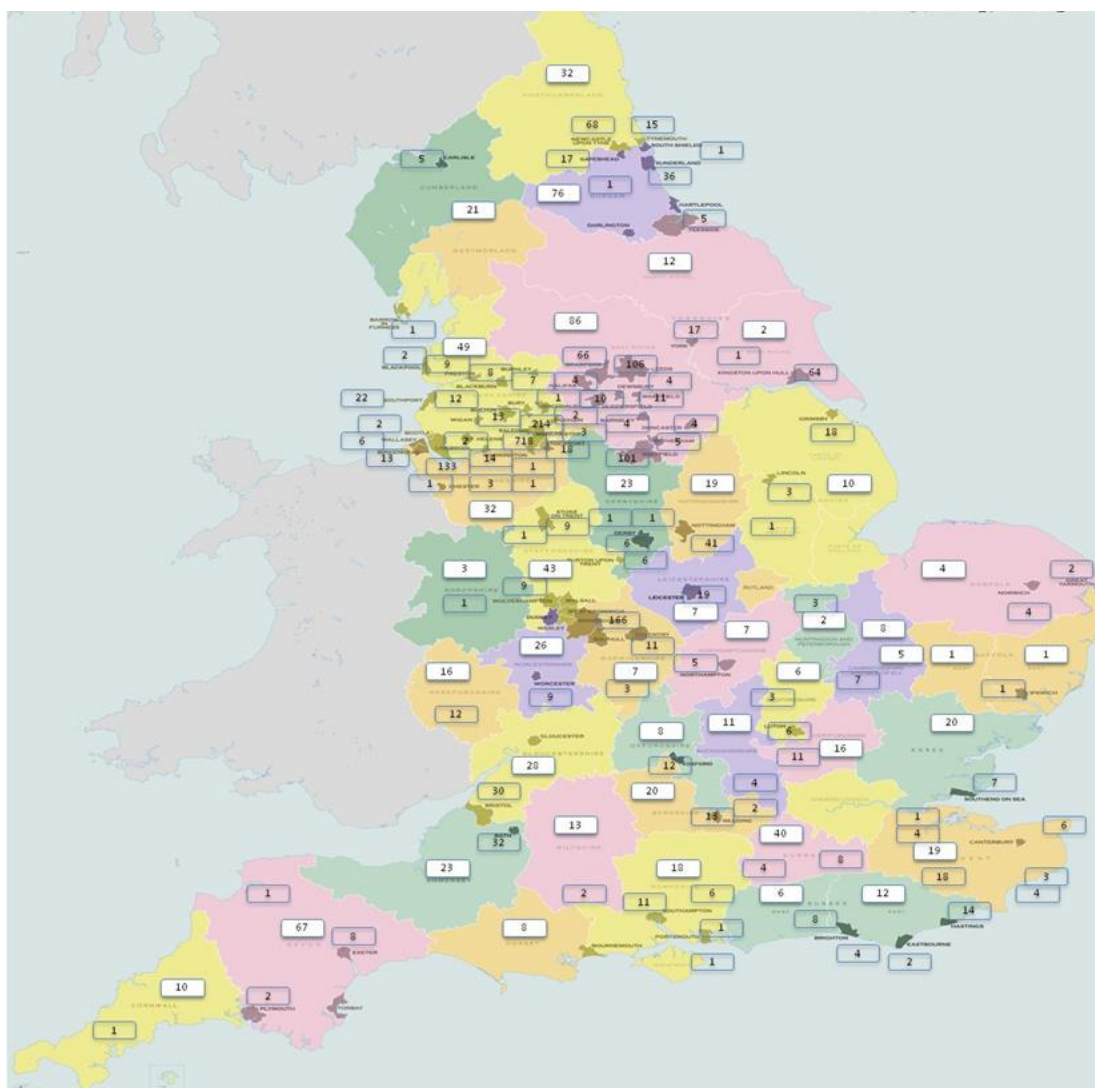
A report compiled in September 1915 and then corrected and updated to 31 January 1916 showed the geographical distribution of male alien enemies at liberty in England. The comprehensive table lists German, Austrian and Turkish males over fifteen years of age by their town, city or county of domicile. Each location has then been broken down to detail alien number by those of military age, those under military age and those over military age.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Figure 7. Male enemy aliens at liberty within the provinces of England to 31 January 1916.<sup>5</sup>



The total numbered some 3,290, which was made up of 1,677 of military age, 35 under military age and 1,578 over military age. These consisted of 1,986 Germans, 1,081 Austrians and 223 Turkish males. At a later date the numbers of Armenian male alien enemies at liberty have been added to the table (that then totalled 315). Although the figures do not include the largest concentration of enemy aliens, that of Greater London, they do highlight where in the English provinces the pre-war communities had once been. These tended to be concentrated around the industrial cities of Lancashire, (Manchester 718, Salford 214, and Liverpool 133,) Yorkshire, (Leeds 106 and Sheffield 101,) and the West Midlands (Birmingham 166). A separate report by the Scottish Advisory Committee compiled in February 1917 put the approximate number of 450 male enemy

<sup>5</sup> TNA: KV 1/65 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration. [White boxes show county numbers, blue boxes show specific town numbers].

aliens at liberty. The Committee had reviewed 1,800 cases regarding internment in Scotland, of which 1,100 had been interned, 400 of which were from the Glasgow area.<sup>6</sup>

The arrest of a twenty-three year old German called Robert Rosenthal on 11 May 1915 first alerted Kell's Bureau to the change in tactics of the German intelligence. Rosenthal had arrived in the United Kingdom on an American passport, from Copenhagen, disguised as a traveller trading in patent lighters. He was arrested as he tried to leave the country through the port of Newcastle.

During interrogation Rosenthal had revealed that, instead of recruiting German nationals as spies, German intelligence intended to make use of agents from neutral countries disguised, like himself, as commercial travellers.<sup>7</sup>

Tried on 6 July 1915, Rosenthal was sentenced to death and hanged on 15 July 1915 at Wormwood Scrubs. Rosenthal's confession left a large impression on Kell and would lead MI5 to change its focus away from German enemy aliens being viewed as the main security threat within the British Isles.

Rosenthal had confirmed that recruits were more likely to come from neutral countries such as the Netherlands, Spain and Norway to spy for Germany. The arrest and subsequent conviction rates for MI5 of persons caught spying for Germany during the Great War also confirms Rosenthal's admission. The period from 1916 to 1918 witnessed the rise of counter-subversion in the forms of pacifism and labour unrest as perceived threats to the stability of the country. This led MI5 to devote more of its time and resources to investigating these threats.

Even with the changes in threat emphasis, the illusion of enemy aliens would still cause great debate and concern when the likes of Joynson-Hicks demanded answers in parliament. However, it would appear that between 1916 and 1918 MI5 was still at the centre of government policy and decision-making on enemy alien issues. The Bureau provided intelligence that was cascaded to other government departments on the threat that enemy aliens posed to the security of Great Britain and provided an important advisory function to the government and police forces around the country on enemy alien policy.

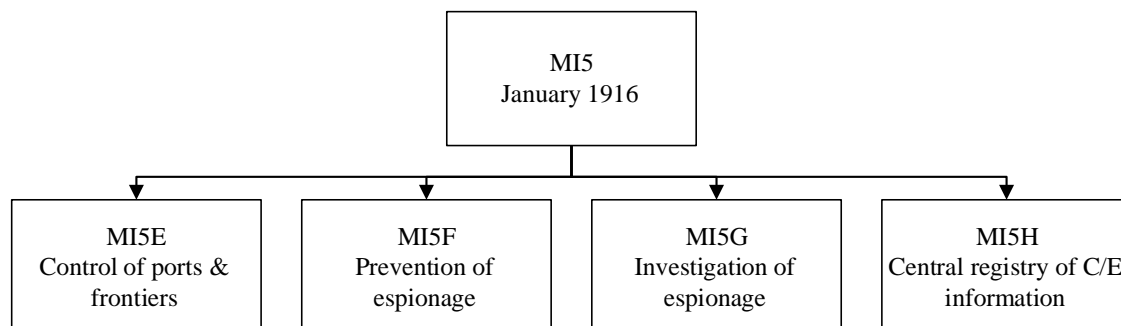
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<sup>6</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch Report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.71.

On the 3 January 1916 the now familiar title MI5 was adopted when the General Staff were reorganised. The sub-sections of MO5 (E) to (H) became MI5 (E) to (H) and the sub-sections of MO5 (a) to (d) became MI6.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 8. Structure of MI5, January 1916.



The expansion of the Bureau witnessed it dealing with a total of 17,749 dossiers. It was by now staffed by nearly 60 officers and over 100 clerks.<sup>9</sup> The ground floor of Watergate House, which was part the York buildings on the Strand, London, occupied by the Bureau since 1912 was no longer large enough. In April 1915 the Bureau took a portion of the block next door known as Adelphi Court and in April 1916 took over the remaining ground and first floors of Watergate House.<sup>10</sup> By 1918 the number of personnel working for MI5 had almost doubled. The numbers of officers increased to 97 and the clerks to support the officers increased to 240. Also increasing in the staff numbers by 1918 were the 230 Ports Police working for MI5E under the Military Control Officers.<sup>11</sup>

The Central Registry of Counter-Espionage Information, Branch H, was the heart of MI5. As the activities of other branches increased so did the information and intelligence the female clerks of H Branch collated and turned in files. The number of files held and kept up to date by the branch grew from 7,543 made in 1915, 10,457 in 1916, 16,817 in 1917 to 22,422 in 1918. By the end of the war H Branch had created and handled a total of 67,445 individual files and posted 358,963 letters.<sup>12</sup> MI5H were also the guardians of the Black Lists. What had started as Special War Lists, compiled before the war and put into action once a conflict commenced had by September 1915 developed into Black Lists and a mini administration industry to keep them up to date. By February 1916 H.7 branch

<sup>8</sup> MO5 Branch E: Counter-Espionage, MO5 Branch F: Prevention of Espionage, MO5 Branch G: Detection of Espionage, MO5 Branch H: Secretariat of Central Bureau.

<sup>9</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch Report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>10</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 'H' Branch report. The organisation and administration.

<sup>11</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch Report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>12</sup> TNA: KV 1/51 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration.



was already in existence to distribute their contents and maintain the vast special card index that they was based upon. H branch duties included:

To circulate to all C.E. Centres of the British and Allied Armies such information as is likely to assist them in their duties.  
To keep up the Bureau Black List and Special Card Index belonging to it.  
To prepare the monthly Record of work of the Bureau.  
To prepare such précis and summaries as may be required for record purposes or for circulation.<sup>13</sup>

Bureau office instructions issued on the 19 May 1916 set out the specific Counter-Espionage information that H.7 branch was responsible in circulating as 'such information as it is desired to communicate to Allied counter-espionage services and other organisation'. In August 1916, under a reorganisation, the work of compiling and maintaining the Black List moved to H.6. Sub-branch H.6a compiled the MI5 Black List and replied to any questions arising out of the list. H.6b studied the list, its indices, and arranged the collection of material to be included in the list. The production of the MI5 Black List had grown by the end of the war to become a publication of twenty-one consecutive volumes and 13,524 entries. It was the principal official notification of suspect persons by MI5. As the entries to the Black List grew, so did its circulation:

The Black list had at first a very limited circulation, only 8 copies in all being distributed when the first volume was produced; but this number was rapidly increased, and by the time the Armistice came, 115 copies of the Black List were in the hands of various British Officers at home and abroad.<sup>14</sup>

It is interesting to note here that a few days after the declaration of war on Germany by the United States, in April 1917, a diplomatic mission led by the Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour set off for Washington.<sup>15</sup> The mission of twenty-five that arrived on 22 April to meet with President Woodrow Wilson and his staff, included Major Claude Dansey of MI5's Branch E.<sup>16</sup> Dansey had before the war been recruited into the security branch. Here he spent three years in New York watching and reporting back on the activities of wealthy Irish-Americans. With the outbreak of war in August 1914 Dansey came back to Britain and was placed in charge of port security. Dansey carried with him on his trip to Washington, volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the Black List and he handed them to Colonel Ralph Van Deman during the mission talks. Van Deman was the then

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<sup>13</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration.

<sup>14</sup> TNA: KV 1/49 'H' Branch report. The organisation and administration.

<sup>15</sup> The diplomatic mission left from Liverpool on 13 April 1917.

<sup>16</sup> The mission included Lord Cunliffe (the Governor of the Bank of England), General Tom Bridges and Admiral de Chair (the two service representatives), an emissary from the Ministry of Munitions and assorted Civil servants. Sir Eric Drummond was his Chief Foreign Office aide and Sir Ian Malcolm his personal private secretary. M Egremont, *Balfour, A life of Arthur James Balfour* (London, 1980), p.287.

head of the Intelligence Department of the American General Staff and was as stated in an H branch report the only Foreign Officer to be issued with a copy of the Black List. Dansey's work with van Deman is credited by Michael Foot as playing: 'a decisive part in helping to set up the first official American military intelligence service.'<sup>17</sup> Van Deman's own assessment, looking back from January 1919 on the work of Dansey states:

I also received a letter from Lt. Col. Claude Dansey, of the British Intelligence Service, telling me that he was to be demobilized. This letter I answered at length thanking him for the very great service he had rendered to the United States Intelligence Services in enabling it to establish a really sound basis for intelligence work.<sup>18</sup>

Read and Fisher comment that Dansey's inclusion in the mission to Washington was an astute move: 'Not only was he one of the most experienced intelligence officers in the country, but he also had an extensive knowledge and understanding (the two do not always go together) of America and a host of contacts at the very highest levels.'<sup>19</sup> Manuscripts, left by Van Deman after his death, show that connections made with MI5 made through the Washington Mission continued long after the conference had finished. Whilst visiting Britain in August and September 1918 Van Deman was given a personal tour of the offices of MI5 by Lieutenant Colonel M. Haldane, head of 'H' Branch on the 27 August.<sup>20</sup> Later on the 31 August 1918 Van Deman lunched at the Navy Club with Major General Macdonogh, director of British Military Intelligence and Captain Mansfield Cummings, head of MI6 amongst others.<sup>21</sup> Finally on the afternoon of the 2 September 1918 Van Deman was again a guest at the offices of MI5 discussing passports and port control with Major H.E. Spencer, head of 'E' Branch, Control of Ports and Frontiers.<sup>22</sup> It also appears that the handing over of MI5's Black List in April 1917 was not an isolated incident as Van Deman states:

Close association of the Military Intelligence Branch with the British and French intelligence services made possible the exchange of information concerning all suspects between three services. This information was carefully carded and constituted what was known as the Suspect List. Lists of suspects in printed pamphlets were frequently received from the Military Intelligence services of both

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<sup>17</sup> M. R. D. Foot, 'Dansey, Sir Claude Edward Marjoribanks (1876–1947)', rev. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 ;online edn, May 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37340>, accessed 12 Feb 2011]

<sup>18</sup> R Weber (ed), *The Final Memoranda. Major General Ralph H. Van Deman, USA Ret. 1865-1952: Father of U.S. Military Intelligence* (Wilmington, 1988).p.86.

<sup>19</sup> A Read & D Fisher, *Colonel Z, The Life and Times of a Master of Spies* (London, 1984).p.99.

<sup>20</sup> Weber, op. cit., p.64.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.65. [Interesting there is no mention by Van Deman of meeting Kell, MI5's head, until the 14th July 1919 where they were both present at a British Home Office conference on Passport Control.]

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.66.

Great Britain and France and the Suspect List before the end of the war consisted of many hundred thousands of cards.<sup>23</sup>

The wide circulation of the Black List by MI5 highlights the reach and influence the Bureau had not just across government departments, but also with Britain's wartime allies.

It is interesting to note that the restrictions placed upon enemy aliens in the United States issued under President Woodrow Wilson on the 6 April and 16 November 1917 were similar to the British model. However, as Nagler points out, Wilson was able to draw on a historical precedent in the Alien Enemy Act of 1798.<sup>24</sup> Of course things had to be on a grander scale in the United States as Nagler estimates, 'Out of the total US population of over 92,000,000 in 1910, over 8,000,000 were first- and second-generation Germans; 2,500,000 of this group had been born in Germany; almost 4,000,000 had two German parents, and the rest had one German parent.'<sup>25</sup> American legislation required all German males over 14 years of age at large within the United States to register their locations, report any change of address and carry registration cards at all times. This group of German-born male residents amounted to a population of over 250,000. The introduction of the restricted zones led the US Justice Department to investigate cases and issue over 200,000 exemption passes to enemy aliens. By the end of the war, a total of 2,048 American enemy aliens had been interned in two camps; one at Fort Douglas in Utah and the other at Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia.<sup>26</sup> It can only be suggested that the work of Dansy and MI5 had influenced American policy towards enemy aliens, however, as Read and Fisher highlight: 'Within a week of his arrival, Dansey had supplied Van Deman with a detailed description of the organisation of British Intelligence and how it operated, both in London and in the field.'<sup>27</sup>

Where British and American enemy alien policy differed was in regard to mass internment. According to Nagler the US Justice Department only considered the temporary use of mass internment once, in July 1918, when the east coast of the United States was thought to be at risk of a possible German submarine attack.<sup>28</sup> Even with the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.32.

<sup>24</sup> J Nagler, 'Victims of the Home Front: Enemy Aliens in the United States during the First World War,' in P Panayi (ed), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North American and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford, 1993). p.196.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.193.

<sup>26</sup> A Krammer, *Undue Process: The Untold Story of America's German Alien Internees* (Lanham, 1997). p.14-15.

<sup>27</sup> Read & Fisher, op. cit., p.103.

<sup>28</sup> Nagler, op. cit., p.202.

introduction of the Espionage and Sabotage Acts in the United States, no spies were convicted during the Great War. However, unlike Britain, successful acts of German-backed sabotage were carried out on US soil. The Black Tom explosion of 30 July 1916 at the country's largest munitions depot in the harbour of Jersey City was the result of saboteurs sponsored by German agents. Howard Blum estimates that the German Secret Service funded sabotage brought destruction to over \$150 million worth of property and caused the deaths of over a hundred people between 1915 and 1917. 'Ships had foundered at sea. Factories had gone up in flames. Munitions depots had exploded. Assassins had been deployed. Germs had been spread.'<sup>29</sup>

The result of the increase in files and black lists maintained by H branch corresponded with the growth of its sub-branches under Lieutenant Colonel M.M. Haldane to seven by the armistices with a staff of 81.

Table 9. The work of Branch H's seven sub-sections.

Sub-section	Duty	Staff member in charge
H.1	Historical Records and Reports	Captain Maxwell
H.2	Registration & Indexing	Miss F.L. Harrison
H.3	Interior Economy	Captain H.M.S. McCance
H.4	Finance	Miss D.P. Thomas
H.5	Control, selection and discipline of women clerks	Miss E.A. Lomax
H.6	Black Lists	Mrs M.D. George
H.7	Office routine	Lieutenant Colonel D.D. Gunn

Branch E, Control of Ports and Frontiers, had been created between May and June 1915. It was established to take the pressure of rapidly growing work around the control, administering and organising of ports around the United Kingdom away from the Preventive Branch, branch G. The remit of MI5E also included the establishment of Permit Offices at home and abroad, and the provision of a special corps of Military Foot Police for duty with the Military Control Officers at Home Ports.<sup>30</sup> The new branch formed a central point for the distribution of orders and information to the Military

<sup>29</sup> H Blum, *Dark Invasion: 1915; Germany's Secret War and the Hunt for the First Terrorist Cell in America* (New York, 2014). p.421.

<sup>30</sup> TNA: KV 1/35 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

Control Officers and assisted the aliens officers at approved ports. Established in July 1915, the Military Permit Offices in Bedford square, London and Rue Chauveau Lagarde, Paris, commanded by MI5E, regulated and examined passenger traffic entering into France through the British Army Zones. Shortly afterwards the branch also took on the staff (from Branch G) involved in comparing records sent in by the Home Office about every prospective passenger for neutral European countries.<sup>31</sup> The Control of Ports and Frontiers branch at the end of the war was managed by Major H.E. Spencer from London with a total staff of two officers and twenty clerks. It consisted of two sub-branches: E.1 Reports and Circulars, under Captain E.T. Whitehead and E.2 Applications for passports and permits, under Captain F Duke. E.1 was responsible for examining and collating reports from all Military Control Officers (M.C.O.'s) and then drafting and distributing counter-espionage circulars relating to questions on United Kingdom passenger traffic. These circulars were distributed to M.C.O.'s in Switzerland, Spain, Scandinavia, Japan, Denmark, Italy, Russia, Greece, Portugal and the United States. E.2 was responsible for the examination of applications to leave the United Kingdom that had come through the Home Office and Military's Permit Offices, the Foreign Office Passport Office and cases referred by the American Permit Office. They also had final examination of applications by alien munitions workers and enemy aliens of British origin wishing to leave the United Kingdom.<sup>32</sup> In early April 1916 Holt-Wilson visited the Paris Permit office and this was followed a day later by a permit offices conference.<sup>33</sup>

With the threat from enemy aliens passing information back to Germany reduced due to their registration and internment under the Alien Restriction Orders (A.R.O.) and Defence of the Realm Regulations (D.R.R.) and the increase in cases of spies, such as Rosenthal, trying to enter the British Isles disguised as neutral business men, the security of ports and frontiers became even more of a priority for MI5.

After the Rosenthal episode, M.I.5. saw that this might well be the new plan of operation, and in an effort to counteract it, Captain Kell arranged that one of his men should be on duty at every port whenever a ship arrived. M.I.5. had expanded considerably since the war began, but this decision meant that even more men had to be recruited. They were found among retired police and Army officers, and were given short but intensive courses of training in counter-espionage to fit them for the work. As a result of having these men constantly on

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<sup>31</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>32</sup> TNA: KV 1/57 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration November 1918.

<sup>33</sup> Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives: Papers of Sir Eric Edward Boketon Holt-Wilson. Reference GBR/0012/MS Add.9794/4. Diary of EHW.

duty to check incoming people, a number of suspects were stopped. Many were never brought to trial, but were quietly interned for the duration of the war.<sup>34</sup>

The investigation of espionage branch, G Branch, worked closely with E Branch passing intelligence information to them on the kinds of suspects to be on the lookout for trying to enter or leave the country through British ports.

A meeting between Major H.E. Spencer, head of 'E' Branch and Van Deman of the American General Staff, then assigned to the G-2 Division of General Pershing's American Expeditionary Force (AEF) Staff on 2 September 1918 discussed the issues relating to passports and port control. The discussions highlight that the spy threat had moved, in MI5's view, from that of the enemy alien within the British Isles to persons trying to enter the country from allied nations. It also highlights the influence and authority MI5 had built up with other allied Governments. Writing about the meeting to Lt. Col. Marlborough Churchill, who had taken on the role of head of the Intelligence Department of the American General Staff when he had been ordered to Europe in June 1918, Van Deman comments:

During the past two or three days I have had several long talks with the men in M.I.5. who are running the Passport and Post Control work. The weakest link in the whole chain now is the U.S. Canadian situation... The British tell me that they have never been able to get the Canadians to establish anything like an effective control because they said that until the U.S. did so, it was useless to attempt it, which of course is true. What is happening now is that people are coming into Canada from the U.S., and then sailing to England without any sort of control. Of course the British can send them back, but a proper control would be much more satisfactory from every point of view. If we have not established a satisfactory Port Control, I suggest that the matter be taken up at once.<sup>35</sup>

The primary activities for Branch MI5F, Prevention of Espionage, throughout the war were in the field of preventive legislation and with the co-ordination of special intelligence work. This work centred on the Aliens Restriction Orders (referred to as A.R.O. in MI5 documents) and the Defence of the Realm Regulations (referred to as D.R.R. in MI5 documents) and keeping them up to date to reflect new information in espionage prevention through emergency legislations amendments. The Defence of the Realm Act was a collection of measures from across government departments which 'were designed originally as a code which should embody the powers of the executive in

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<sup>34</sup> J Bulloch, *M.I.5. The Origin and History of the British Counter-Espionage Service* (London, 1963), p.115.

<sup>35</sup> Weber, op. cit., p.165.

time of war for purely military purposes, including first counter-espionage and secondly the measures necessary for the defence of any given district against a threatened invasion.’<sup>36</sup> These regulations applied to the whole population. The Aliens Restrictions Act contained provisions which applied to enemy and friendly aliens, but not to British subjects. A description of the process for changes in legislation highlights the work and influence required with other government departments to push through recommendations made by branch F.

The proposals themselves would in all cases be worked out in detail by the Preventive Branch, on the basis of suggestions put forward, probably by the Detective Branch, as a result of some actual occurrence which showed that the existing regulations contained some flaw or were not framed to provide for some likely contingency. The draft amendment, once agreed upon by the different branches of the Bureau, would be submitted to some higher authority (i.e. the Director or Sub-Director of Military Operations – later of Military Intelligence). After receiving the seal of his approval, the draft would be discussed, first informally and then officially, with the Home Office or any other Government Department concerned. In due course, an Interdepartmental Conference would be assembled to consider Agenda brought up by the S.I.B., and would arrive at a decision for or against each separate point – in a very many cases introducing supplementary provisions which would have to be inserted in the draft proposals, each Department’s approval being required for the final draft. At length the Parliamentary Draftsman would be called upon to examine the finished article and if need be to alter it, so that it would be certified to be sound in every part. Then only would the Order in Council be passed and promulgated.<sup>37</sup>

The detailed amendments and new clauses recommended by MI5F between 1916 and 1918 show how the perceived threat from a small population of Germans and Austrians classed as enemy aliens grew to include Turkish residents in the country from November 1914, and by 1916 was widened to all aliens within the British Isles. The definition of alien by 1918 includes people from neutral countries and even people from allied countries fighting alongside Britain.

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<sup>36</sup> TNA: KV 1/35 ‘F’ Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>37</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 ‘F’ Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

Table 10. Alien Registration within the United Kingdom.<sup>38</sup>

Category	London	Prohibited Areas	Rest of the Country
Enemy aliens	5 August 1914	5 August 1914	5 August 1914
All aliens	-	5 August 1914	14 February 1916
All aliens entering London, not already resident	14 February 1916	-	-
All French, Russians, Italians and Serbs over 18 years of age resident in London	26 July 1916	-	-
All male aliens not previously registered	16 December 1916	-	-
All others	8 June 1918	-	-

After 8 June 1918, alien registration within the United Kingdom was absolutely complete and from that date, by order of the Home Secretary, no exceptions were permitted.

MI5F by the end of the war was headed by Assistant Director, Major Eric F.B Holt-Wilson D.S.O. with a staff of 60 officers and over 100 clerks. The branch had been split into four sub-branches. F.1 Co-operation with Civil Authorities, under Lieutenant Colonel S.J. Jervis was responsible for the civilian credentials of Aliens for intelligence purposes. This included the maintenance of registers relating to aliens, the communities and clubs, supervision of alien repatriation, and the examination of applications for naturalisation as British subjects.

Sub-branch F.2 Co-operation with Naval, Military and Air Authorities, was controlled by Major P.H.M. Dorehill. With three staff, this area examined the credentials of any appointments to the navy, military or government. They also collated instructions and circulars concerning Aliens Restriction Orders and Defence of the Realm Regulations, and maintained the official lists of vulnerable points and special military areas. F.3 Disposal of suspects & undesirables, under G.H. Steafeld was responsible for the supervision of any alien who had been granted permission to enter prohibited areas or released from internment. This included sharing information and distributing records of alien undesirables with local police forces. F.4 Legal procedures and advice, under Major H.B. Matthews examined the legislative drafts for counter-espionage, instructions arising

<sup>38</sup> TNA: PRO KV 1/36 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.



from the Defence of the Realm Regulations and legal advice. Supporting F.4 was a section called F.L. devoted to legal assistance under W.H. Moresby.

By 1916, the aims of MI5G had not changed and remained the same to the end of the war. The function of Branch G, Detection of Espionage was to investigate cases of enemy espionage and where enemy agents were discovered to collect evidence against them in order to bring the agent to justice or nullify their efforts to sabotage the British war plans. By the Armistice, the Detection of Espionage Branch was headed by Lieutenant Colonel J Sealy Clarke with a total of 74 staff. The Branch consisted of five sub-branches.

Table 11. The work of Branch G's five sub-sections.<sup>39</sup>

Sub-section	Duty	Staff member in charge
G.1	Espionage cases	Captain S.R. Cooke
G.2	Enquiries into bona-fides of persons	Major E. Anson
G.2a	Examination and investigation of suspicious letters, cables and evasion of censorship	
G.2b	Enquiries and investigations into the bona fides of persons and corresponding with police forces around the United Kingdom	
G.3	Special investigations	Captain E.J.R.H Radcliffe
G.4	Pacifism and Russian affairs	Captain M.W. Bray
G.L	Preparation of cases	Captain Sir Lindsey Smith

What had transformed since the beginning of the war was the change in focus of G branch's resource towards domestic threats from new groups or individuals. This became the primary focus of Detection of Espionage's sub-branch G4. In January 1916 the introduction of the Military Service Act made single men of between 18 and 41 years old liable for military service. This was then enlarged on 25 May 1916 to include all married men. Then by the end of the war the age limited for recruits was raised to 51. Conscription began on 2 March 1916 and with its introduction came applications for exemptions through military tribunals on the grounds of occupation, ill-health, hardship and conscientious objection. By 1918 some 16,300 men had faced the military tribunals on the grounds of conscientious objection and groups like the 'No Conscription Fellowship' (NCF) formed by Fenner Brockway and pacifist group the 'Fellowship of Reconciliation' (FoR) campaigned against conscription. Of the 16,300 conscientious

<sup>39</sup> TNA: KV 1/57 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration November 1918.

objectors, 200 were given absolute exemption and almost 6,000 men were arrested, court-martialled and sent to prison.<sup>40</sup> This rise of pacifism led MI5G to devote time and resources to the 'Investigation of seditious and pacifist propaganda prejudicial to military security' and sub-branch G.4 were given the specific tasks of:

Investigations of cases of sedition and dissemination of peace propaganda, and of offences committed against D.R.R 27 and 42, otherwise than through the press.

Examination and preparation of reports and articles on sedition and peace propaganda as affecting military security.<sup>41</sup>

Regulation 27 of the Defence of the Realm Act related to the prohibition of spreading of false or prejudicial reports and against prejudicial performances or exhibitions. Whereas, regulation 42 related specifically to interference with military duties and with war supplies and included the prohibition of causing mutiny or impeding the production of war material.

Events in Russia during 1917 and the series of revolutions leading to the establishment of a Bolshevik government in November sent shock waves across Europe. It caused MI5 to review the status of Russian aliens within the United Kingdom. Intelligence had linked German support of the Bolsheviks with the objective of undermining the Russian war effort. It was considered that the German secret service could therefore be assisting possible British Bolshevik sympathizers to undermine security at home.<sup>42</sup> MI5G's mission was again enlarged to incorporate the Bolshevik threat with 'Investigation into the activities where detrimental to national interests of persons of Russian, Finnish, Polish and Czecho-Slovak nationalities' added to its main duties. Sub-branch G.4 was given the main responsibilities of:

Investigations of cases of persons of the above nationalities [Russian, Finnish, Polish and Czecho-Slovak] and of their activities in connection with Bolshevism, espionage, strikes, pacifism, etc., in the United Kingdom.

Investigation into the bona fides of persons of the above nationalities entering or leaving the United Kingdom, or applying for permits to work on munitions; and of all persons travelling to and from Russia, together with those recommended by M.I.R for employment in Russia.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> W Ellsworth-Jones, *We will not fight* (London, 2007), p.228.

<sup>41</sup> TNA: KV 1/57 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration November 1918.

<sup>42</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.100.

<sup>43</sup> TNA: KV 1/57 'H' Branch report. Organisation and Administration November 1918.

It is interesting to note that the mind-set of MI5 had placed a possible link between Bolshevism with strikes and pacifism in the United Kingdom. Even before the Bolshevik threat, amendments had been made to the Defence of the Realm Regulations (D.R.R.) in May 1916 to help the branch in the investigation of strikes and the leaders of strike action, 'In order to enable the police to keep in touch with the strike-leaders deported from Glasgow, a paragraph was added to Reg. 55 enabling the police to take photographs and fingers-prints of persons arrested under this Regulation.'<sup>44</sup>

During the period of 1916 to 1918 the numbers of spies brought to trial and convicted through the work of G Branch declined in comparison with the period 1914 to 1916. As it was a secret department, with agents that never had the power of arrest, the glory of arresting spies at large in the British Isles went to Sir Basil Thomson's Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard. However, as an MI5 report pointed out success should never be judged on just number of spies caught.

In 1916, only five persons were arrested and tried on charges of espionage. It is apparently a paradox, but it is none the less true, and a most important truth, that the efficiency of a counter espionage service is not to be measured only or chiefly by the numbers of spies caught by it. For such a service even if it catches no spies at all, may in fact perform the most admirable work by hampering the enemy's intelligence service, and causing it to lose money, labour, and, most precious of all, time, in overcoming the obstacles placed in its way.<sup>45</sup>

On 21 September 1916 the co-ordination of Counter espionage work in the British Empire and Overseas Dominions was seen as so important as to form a separate branch: MI5D. This was not the first time that the co-ordination of policy in this field had been mooted. Maurice Hankey, Assistant Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), had proposed a Sub-Committee on 'War Organisation of the British Empire' back in November 1909. He set out: 'It is submitted that a document should be drawn up which should embody the action to be taken by each department of the government at the "Precautionary" and "War" stages in all questions which concern more than one department.'<sup>46</sup> Section five of the submission addressed the need to co-ordinate aliens of enemy nationality in war across the British Empire.

It would seem desirable to consider the question of the disposal of aliens of enemy nationality in war. At some places, such as important naval bases, it might be desirable to deport them, while at others some system of registration or observation would be sufficient. The Home Office and Colonial Office would

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<sup>44</sup> TNA: KV 1/43 'G' Branch report. Investigation of Espionage 1916.

<sup>45</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>46</sup> Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge: HNKY 7/4 Proposed Sub-Committee on the 'war organisation of the British Empire' 1909.

appear to be concerned in an inquiry of this nature, which might advantageously be undertaken by the Committee.<sup>47</sup>

Hankey's 1909 proposal never made it to full paper submission before the Committee of Imperial Defence, but by 1916 the benefits of co-ordinating policy and counter-espionage intelligence had led to the creation of MI5D under Lieutenant Colonel F. Hall. The main duty of the branch was the co-ordination of Imperial Counter Espionage and this included both Colonial and Irish affairs.

Before September 1916 the work of corresponding with Colonial governmental departments around the Empire with regards to counter-espionage had been left to MI5G's sub branches G.3 (Special Investigations) and G.1 (Espionage Cases). Efforts had been made during the summer of 1915 through the Colonial Office 'to secure some uniformity of Special Intelligence' throughout the British Overseas Dominions and within a year contact had been made with those responsible for counter-espionage across almost all the Colonies.

As part of this quest to achieve uniformity of Special Intelligence across the Empire Holt-Wilson left London for Egypt via Folkestone on 29 January 1916.<sup>48</sup> Taking the boat to Boulogne, Wilson then crossed France to the port of Marseilles where he embarked upon another ship for Egypt. On 2 February Holt-Wilson spent time in Malta, before continuing his journey to Egypt.<sup>49</sup> He arrived in Egypt on 15 February. Holt-Wilson's first meeting in Cairo was with Colonel George W Harvey at the police headquarters on 18 February. Nicknamed 'Harvey Pasha,' Colonel Harvey was the High Commissioner, commandant of the Cairo police and director of the Anthropometric Bureau.<sup>50</sup> Harvey had been appointed to the post in response to the assassination of Egypt's prime minister in 1910. The assassin was discovered to be an Egyptian national who had been educated in London. This link prompted the intelligence communities in Britain and Egypt to work in closer co-operation. Harvey established a new intelligence organisation in Cairo called the Central Special Office (CSO). The office received training from Britain and MI5 sub-branch G.2 provided investigation information on Egyptian nationals residing with the United Kingdom.<sup>51</sup> In return the CSO had been

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives: Papers of Sir Eric Edward Boketon Holt-Wilson. Reference GBR/0012/MS Add.9794/4. Diary of EHW.

<sup>49</sup> Compton Mackenzie noted that MI5 had a foothold in Malta and were in charge of censorship. C Mackenzie, *Greek Memories* (London, 2011), p.93.

<sup>50</sup> H Tollefson, *Policing Islam: The British Occupation of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Struggle Over Control of the Police 1882-1914* (London, 1999), p.116.

<sup>51</sup> O Sirrs, *The Egyptian Intelligence Service: A History of Mukhabarat 1910-2009* (London, 2010), p.9.

providing reports and Black Lists on Egyptian subversives to MI5 and the British government. As Egypt had become a British Protectorate in December 1914, its intelligence fell under MI5 and Kell, rather than Cumming at MI6.<sup>52</sup>

Two days later Holt-Wilson was at Cairo's citadel for meetings with Colonel Clayton. Colonel Gilbert Falkington Clayton had been the director of intelligence at the British military headquarters in Cairo, but had moved on to form the Arab Bureau in January 1916. T.E. Lawrence who worked at the Arab Bureau under Clayton described him:

He was calm, detached, clear-sighted, of unconscious courage in assuming responsibility. He gave an open run to his subordinates. His own views were general, like his knowledge; and he worked by influence rather than by loud direction. It was not easy to decry his influence. He was like water, or permeating oil, creeping silently and insistently through everything.<sup>53</sup>

Rutledge credits Clayton with being the catalyst for major change to British Arab policy in the Middle East.<sup>54</sup> Clayton's position as a key intelligence influencer in February 1916 made it important for Holt-Wilson to spend time with him. Alongside Clayton's army intelligence department experience and his personal contacts he was also responsible for the Egyptian civilian intelligence service. Clayton's Arab Bureau was established as a section of Sudan Intelligence in Cairo reporting to Lieutenant Colonel Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, then High Commissioner of Egypt. Holt-Wilson met with McMahon on 22 February, before again meeting and dining with Clayton on 24 February.

After leaving Cairo on 29 February Holt-Wilson headed to Alexandria. Here he had meetings with Colonel H Hopkinson, Commandant of the Alexandria city police. This harks back to the early days of the secret service bureau when building good relations with local police forces was paramount in providing raw data from the field and valuable resources to carry out investigations. In a space of ten days Holt-Wilson had made personal connections with the key British intelligence players in Egypt and the wider Middle East who were all involved in the process of forming Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau (EMSIB). Based in Alexandria, the MI6 bureau opened in March 1916.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> K Jeffery, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949* (London, 2010), p.131.

<sup>53</sup> T Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (London, 1935), p.57.

<sup>54</sup> I Rutledge, *Enemy on the Euphrates: The British Occupation of Iraq and the Great Arab Revolt 1914-1921* (London, 2014), p.77.

<sup>55</sup> Jeffery, *MI6*, p.131

Leaving Egypt on 1 March 1916 Holt-Wilson then sailed to Athens, Greece. En route he stopped at the port of Mudros where he met General Sir Archibald Paris and in Salonica (Salonika) spending time at the British army headquarters.<sup>56</sup> Once in Athens on 13 March Holt-Wilson headed to the British Legation where he held two days of meeting with Compton Mackenzie of the Special Intelligence Service (SIS), MI6. Mackenzie was pessimistic about his upcoming meeting with Holt-Wilson, expecting little in the way of practical help, however he was pleasantly surprised:

In due course Holt-Wilson arrived, and my gloomy anticipations were delightfully dispelled. At last I had found a man who was capable of understanding at once all our difficulties. The shock of meeting somebody connected with Intelligence work who could understand immediately what was wanted, and why it was wanted, proved too much for my nerves.<sup>57</sup>

During the meetings at the British Legation Mackenzie and Holt-Wilson shared best practice on card-indexing systems, talked finances, reviewed lists of individuals who had been deported or interned in the Mediterranean region and discussed the conflicting remits of the various intelligence organisations. Towards the end of their meetings Mackenzie notes that Holt-Wilson said: ““I think I shall be able to help you a bit when I get back to London. It was C himself at the Malta conference who asked me to have a look in at Athens, and I think he’ll listen to me.””<sup>58</sup>

This remark then places Holt-Wilson at an Anglo-French-Italian intelligence conference held on Malta in early March 1916. The conference took place between 2 and 9 March and explored Mediterranean counter-espionage co-operation. Cumming was in attendance and it is possible Holt-Wilson met him there. Holt-Wilson’s journal entries place himself on a ship in the Mediterranean at the time of the conference having left Alexandria on 1 March and arriving at the port of Mudros on 7 March. However his journal fails to note a stop in Malta in this period.

From Athens on 15 March Holt-Wilson travelled back to Egypt, via Salonica. Between 22 and 25 March Holt-Wilson again met with McMahon at the Residency in Cairo and spent time at the Cairo War Office. In this time he also filed his report on Mackenzie’s Athens operations to the EMSIB in Alexandria. Holt-Wilson left Alexandria on 29 March for London. Andrew, discussing MI5 activity in Africa in the

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<sup>56</sup> The port of Mudros on the Greek Island of Lemnos is where the armistice between Turkey and the Allies was signed in October 1918. Major General Sir Archibald Paris had been commanding the Royal Naval Division whilst on garrison duties in the eastern Mediterranean.

<sup>57</sup> Mackenzie, op. cit., p.91.

<sup>58</sup> Mackenzie, op. cit., p.93.

mid 1950s, mentions: 'Eric Holt-Wilson's pre-war [Second World War] vision of a great imperial security network dominated by the Service began to become a reality.'<sup>59</sup> The seeds for Holt-Wilson's imperial security network vision appear to have been sown during his Mediterranean tour of 1916.

The work of MI5G's sub branches G.3 and G.1 (Espionage Cases) had up until September 1916 mainly concentrated on whatever cases of espionage had been reported from Ireland. MI5D continued to be responsible for: 'investigating the connection between Germany and the seditious movements in Ireland on the one hand and in the British possessions and protectorates in the Orient on the other.'<sup>60</sup>

From the Orient, evidence reached London in October 1915 of a German-Indian revolutionary movement trying to weaken the British position. Established in Berlin, the Indian Committee sought to promote direction action for independence from Indian political activists. Scotland Yard's Basil Thomson notes that after the discovery of a German-Indian plan to simultaneously assassinate leading allied figures including Lord Grey and Lord Kitchener a number of British Indians were interned.<sup>61</sup>

As soon as the available evidence was complete steps were taken simultaneously to detain all persons who were in British jurisdiction. They were interned as persons dangerous to the safety of the Realm, and kept in internment until the Armistice, despite repeated appeals to the Committee set up to revise Internment Orders made by the Home Secretary.<sup>62</sup>

The SSB's Indian expert, Robert Nathan, joined the bureau in November 1914 and worked closely with Basil Thomson. In the spring of 1916 Nathan left MI5, moving to North American and worked on the Hindu-German conspiracy trials in Chicago and San Francisco.<sup>63</sup>

Threats from groups in Ireland to the security of the British Isles were nothing new. The Fenian dynamite campaign of 1867-1868 resulted in the Clerkenwell prison explosion of 13 December 1867 that killed twelve people. A second Fenian dynamite campaign of 1881-1885 saw attacks on public buildings around Britain. These included in 1881 bombs exploding outside Salford and Chester barracks and Liverpool town hall and a bomb being defused outside the Mansion House in London. By 1883 the campaign had centred on London with targets including the offices of *The Times* newspaper,

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<sup>59</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p. 458

<sup>60</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>61</sup> Thomson, *Queer*, p.99.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.92-93.

London underground tunnels and bridge and railway stations such as Charring Cross, Paddington and Victoria. Final targets in 1885 included the Tower of London and the Palace of Westminster, with a bomb exploding in the Chamber of the House of Commons.<sup>64</sup> In response to these terrorist campaigns a 'Fenian office' was set up at Scotland Yard. What is surprising is that it took until September 1916 for Ireland and Colonial work to become so large that it was necessary to take Branch G.3 Special Investigations and create Special Branch D to deal with the work load. A trigger for a separate branch must have been the discovery of help by Germany to Irish nationalists in connection with events surrounding the Easter Rising of April 1916.

On the morning of Good Friday, 21 April 1916, a German submarine in the Bay of Tralee, dropped off three men who then waded ashore from a small boat. One of these men was Roger Casement who had formerly been in the employment of the British Consular Services before retiring in 1913. Casement, then aged 51 had been in Germany negotiating a deal where in return for German guns and munitions supplied to the Irish rebels, the rebels would rise against British rule diverting troops and attention away from the war on the Western Front. However Casement's plans had been picked up in decrypted cable traffic between the German embassy in Washington and Berlin by the Admiralty's SIGINT unit. As Andrew points out:

The most important decrypts were those which revealed that German arms for the Easter Rising were to be landed in Tralee Bay in the spring of 1916 and that Casement was following by U boat.<sup>65</sup>

Casement, who once ashore had been hiding at a place called McKenna's Fort, was arrested under the Defence of the Realm Regulations by a local policeman shortly after one o'clock in the afternoon. The arms shipment carried aboard the German steamer *Aud* was intercepted on its way to Tralee Bay by the British naval ship *Bluebell* and ordered to Queenstown. The next morning the German crew scuttled the steamer and were then arrested as prisoners of war. Casement was brought back to the mainland and later tried under the Treason Act. He was sentenced to death and hung at Pentonville Prison on 3 August 1916.

Casement had not been the only Irish activist in touch with Germany. During its preparations for an uprising, the military council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood sent Joseph Plunkett, a member of the brotherhood's military committee, to Berlin in the

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<sup>64</sup> B Porter, *The Origins of the Vigilant State* (London, 1987), p.19-49.

<sup>65</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.87.



spring of 1915 to secure weapons for an Irish rebellion, independently of Casement. With the shipment of German weapons scuttled (on Friday 21 April - Good Friday) the Republican Brotherhood decided to continue as planned with the Easter uprising that took hold of Dublin on Monday 24 April 1916. The uprising consisted of around 1,200 nationalist rebels who assembled and seized key points in Dublin. Once in control, seven members of a self-appointed Irish Provisional Government proclaimed an independent Irish Republic.<sup>66</sup> However, with the strong British army response the rebels unconditionally surrendered on Saturday 29 April. The fighting on the streets of Dublin claimed the lives of over 400 dead and wounded 2,500. Leaders of the rebellion were brought to trial and executed between the 3 and 12 of May and included the seven signatories to the Proclamation of the Republic who were shot by firing squad. What the arrest and trial of Casement and the events of the Easter Uprising in Dublin did for MI5 was confirm its suspicions that:

It was a special feature of Germany's policy to foster and encourage any movements of un-rest and sedition directed against the British Empire. Thus it came about that the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland and America, the Home Rule and seditious movements in India, the Egyptian nationalist, Turkish Nationalist, Pan-Islamic and Greek Royalist Movement, all of which with their accompanying plots and conspiracies, were supported and in some cases promoted by Germany.<sup>67</sup>

In the short term the Easter Uprising triggered the Branch F amendment processes to the Defence of the Realm Regulations:

As an indirect result of the Irish Rebellion, D.R.R.14.B was amended (8<sup>th</sup> June 1916), so as to provide powers to deal with persons interned in pursuance of orders under 14.B. as though they were prisoners of war. This was necessary in order to arrange adequately for guarding the large number of Irish rebels interned in England under D.R.R. 14B.<sup>68</sup>

The link between the Sinn Fein movement and Irish supporters in the United States was not a new one brought about by the war. Before the war the security branch had agents based in the United States trailing wealthy Irish Americans and reporting back on their activities. However the war and the entry of the United States into the conflict meant that MI5 had access to American intelligence services and could pool information with them. Van Deman, the head of the Intelligence Department of the American General

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<sup>66</sup> Seven members included: Thomas J Clarke, Sean MacDermada, Thomas MacDonagh, P.H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, Jamies Connolly and Joseph Plunkett.

<sup>67</sup> TNA: KV 1/19 'D' Branch report. Imperial Overseas Intelligence.

<sup>68</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

Staff, noted that this group of Irish-Americans not only posed a threat to the British Isles but also to the internal security of the United States.

During the entire war, organizations composed of Irish men in the United States engaged in operations which they hoped would harm Great Britain. Many of the activities, while of course operating against Great Britain also harmed the United States and the other Allied powers as well. One typical case of the kind of activities by Irish organizations in the United States was the attempt to destroy a copper mine in the western part of the country on which the Allies were depending for a large quantity of that most important war material. The plot to destroy this mine was discovered thru the development of a secret ink letter which was intercepted by the Post Office censorship and turned over to Military Intelligence.<sup>69</sup>

To combat the threat and gain valuable long-term intelligence Branch D.1 was created in September 1917. Led by a Captain F. Jackson with two staff at his disposal the sub-branch was made responsible for Irish–American affairs. These duties included the ‘examination of censored letters or intercepted correspondence dealing therewith, Irish Intelligence Reports and Co-operation with G.H.Q., H.F. thereon, and questions affecting Ireland.’<sup>70</sup> Two more sub-branches were also added in September 1917; D.2 Colonial Affairs and D.3 Oriental Affairs. Branch D.2 under Captain C.W.J. Orr and his two staff dealt with general correspondence and questions affecting the British Dominions and Colonies. Branch D.3 dealt with investigations, correspondence and questions affecting India, the Middle East and Egypt under Captain C.G. Stephen, S. Newby and their three staff. Its work included co-operation with the India Office and assessing the threat from individuals wanting home rule in India. Shortly before the end of the war in October 1918, two more sub-branches were added to MI5D. Branch D.4 co-ordinated communications with the Special Intelligence Missions in Allied Countries such as those in Washington and Rome and Branch D.5 was responsible for Ciphers and codes. By the end of the war, what had started from humble beginnings to deal with Colonial Correspondence and cases of espionage from Ireland, D Branch had become responsible for all work in which MI5 was concerned outside Great Britain in her colonies and overseas dominions.

MI5A dealt with work (originally performed by the SIB’s preventive branch MO5G(b), and then for a time – taken over by the Ministry of Munitions) connected with

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<sup>69</sup> Weber, op. cit., p.35.

<sup>70</sup> TNA: KV 1/19 ‘D’ Branch report. Imperial Overseas Intelligence.

the registration and control of Aliens on war work in the United Kingdom.<sup>71</sup> With the influx of Belgian refugees in September 1914 to the British Isles, MO5G had been responsible for the examination of refugees' credentials and enforcing policy that excluded them from prohibited military areas and limited their work so it would 'neither interfere with available British Labour nor place the alien in a position to do mischief if evilly inclined.'<sup>72</sup> In March 1916, the Belgian work and the staff were transferred to the Ministry of Munitions Labour Intelligence (M.M.L.I.), later renamed Parliamentary Military Secretary (P.M.S.2.). The reason for its transfer came down to the connection of the output of munitions with industrial disturbances and 'general labour unrest and troubles, in which alien labour was regarded as an important factor.'<sup>73</sup> However, a squabble between the Ministry of Munitions and the Home Office over an accusation that the police had been unwilling to give assistance in the prosecutions and with administering the provisions of Article 22a of the Alien Restriction Act led to the work being transferred back to MI5. With this transfer the administration of the Alien War Service and orders regarding the control of munitions work that could be undertaken by aliens became a branch in its own right on 23 April 1917 – MI5A. The staff of MI5A at the point of transfer consisted of 3 British officers, 2 Belgian officers, 4 male clerks, and 38 women clerks. At the time of the transfer, Captain F.H.L. Stevenson was placed in charge of the branch, followed by Major Spencer in July 1917, Major Sealy Clarke in August 1917 and finally by Major Welchman from April 1918 to the end of the war. The general duties of MI5 were: to examine the credentials of all aliens employed in munitions manufacture and grant permits to work; to keep a register of all aliens employed in munitions and track their movements between factories; and to approve all applications for permits to leave the United Kingdom by alien munitions workers. These duties were then split in four sub branches.

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<sup>71</sup> TNA: KV1 /35 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>72</sup> TNA: KV1 /13 'A' Branch report. Aliens employed on war services 1916-1919.

<sup>73</sup> TNA: KV 1/13 'A' Branch report. Aliens employed on war services 1916-1919.

Table 12. The work of Branch A's five sub-sections.

Sub-section	Duty	Staff member in charge
A.1	Review of alien munitions workers who wished to leave the United Kingdom and cancellation permit cases	Major P.F.N. Toulmin
A.2	Review of applications submitted by the Labour Exchanges of alien for employment on munitions work	Captain G.M. Cookson and Captain E.B. Powell
A.3	Interviews of aliens working on munitions and those wishing to leave the United Kingdom	Baron A. Sadoine
A.4	General correspondence for the branch and compiled statistics for aliens employed in munitions work.	Mrs Fillett

The branch produced a complete list of enemy aliens engaged on munitions work compiled in September 1918 which included 900 names.<sup>74</sup> The list, which gave names, ages, nationalities, and the munitions firms in which aliens were employed, had been asked for by Lord Cheylesmore and the Aliens Advisory Committee.

It was also in September 1918 that the branch took on the work of vetting all Government Office employees. Every government employee was compelled to provide MI5A with their own nationality and that of their parents. From then onwards the branch examined the credentials of all proposed persons for employment in government departments. By the Armistice MI5A employed 5 officers, 2 male clerks, and 47 women clerks. However peace brought more work to the branch as aliens sought permission to leave the country.

As a result of the repatriation of aliens about 18,393 Identity Books of those who had been working on munitions or on Auxiliary War Service were received by M.I.5.A. Of this number 6,949 names were looked up on the records of this branch by the end of March 1919.<sup>75</sup>

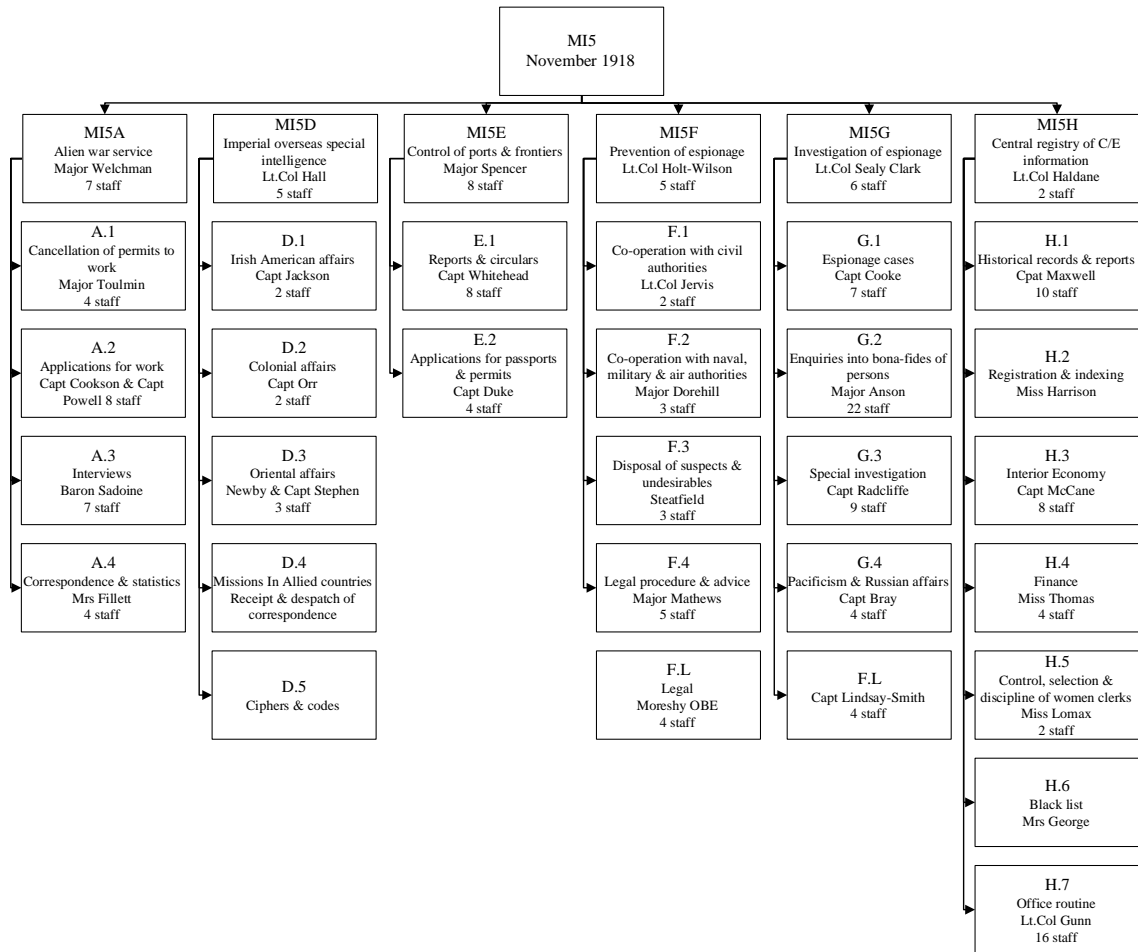
The staff of the Bureau on Armistice Day consisted of 133 officers, 300 clerks (the large majority women) and 274 ports police.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> TNA: KV 1/14 'A' Branch report. Aliens employed on war services 1916-1919.

<sup>75</sup> TNA: KV 1/13 'A' Branch report. Aliens employed on war services 1916-1919.

<sup>76</sup> TNA: KV 1/35 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

Figure 9. Distribution of MI5 duties in November 1918 <sup>77</sup>



At the Armistice the successful record of MI5 must be judged on that fact that no single act of sabotage took place within the United Kingdom during the Great War. Over the four years of the war, thirty-one German agents were brought to trial through the work and information supplied by the branches of MI5. Of those, eleven were charged under the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act, sentenced to the death penalty and executed in the Tower of London. Their nationalities included: one American, two naturalised German-Americans, two Dutch, one Russian, one Swede, one Uruguayan, one German-Brazilian, one Peruvian-Scandinavian and one disputed Danish-German. The arrest of Carl Hans Lody back in 1914, Bulloch puts forward, demonstrates the success of the policy adopted by the British Government on enemy aliens.

Although it was fairly confidently believed that all the German agents in Britain had been rounded up, the Government quite deliberately fostered fear of spies. In this way every citizen became an auxiliary of the counter-espionage service.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> TNA: KV 1/56 'H' Branch report: Organisation & Administration.

<sup>78</sup> Bulloch, op. cit., p.97.

The British public's illusory fears continued through the period 1916 to 1918 based on the idea that the German enemy alien was the main threat to security with the British Isles. However, the changing nature of MI5's work and its changing organisational structure in this period shows that, rather than foster an illusory fear of spies, it was at the forefront of alerting governmental circles to new possible internal security threats to the British Isles and throughout the Empire. MI5, through its reports commissioned shortly after the war, was keen to make the link that the small numbers of spy trials and convictions were down to successful legislation and good old detective work to make the British Isles impenetrable to German-backed plots.

Up till the end of 1914, the Detective Branch had arrested only one spy during the war, apart from those two-and-twenty known agents who were bagged in a single batch during the Precautionary Period. But during the spring and summer of 1915, no less than 16 spies were arrested, and eventually brought to trial and sentenced to death or penal servitude. With the winter months of 1915, there came a lull, due very possibly to the success of the frontier control and of other preventive measures.<sup>79</sup>

What is also demonstrated by the development of MI5 between 1916 and 1918 is its influence and reach across government departments and even other Allied Governments on the subject of domestic security and its legislation. At the centre of this was Captain Vernon Kell.

In little more than five years Kell entirely changed his own status and that of the department he formed. In 1910 his request for a clerk was used as an excuse for a lecture on the need for economy, but by the middle of the first war Kell was in a position to go direct to any Minister from the Prime Minister downwards for what he wanted. It is typical of the man, but also revealing of the regard in which he was held, that when Asquith summoned him to a meeting one Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, Kell courteously replied that he would attend after church – and got away with it.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 'F' Branch report. Prevention of Espionage 1914-1918.

<sup>80</sup> Bulloch, op. cit., p.22.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Secret Service Bureau's role in developing enemy alien legislation 1909-1918**

This chapter examines the role of Secret Service Bureau in developing enemy alien legislation and its policy influence with other government departments from the bureau's birth through to 1918. By 1916 the enemy alien legislation and internment policy had been so successful that the German intelligence service had to change its methods for extracting information from the British Isles. But was this success down to a proactive enemy alien policy approach through planned means, or a reaction to press and public pressure? This chapter will focus on the key pieces of pre-war legislations developed through the CID as part of the war books, debated and enacted by parliament and finally implemented by the Home and War Offices on the outbreak of war. Were these policies consistent with the advice and direction given by the Secret Service Bureau?

Lecture notes on security intelligence in war, dated 1934, among the papers of Vernon Kell give an indication of the importance of influencing and leading the direction of alien legislation.

Included amongst the tasks of the Security Service is also that of advising Government Departments upon the legislative measures necessary for dealing with secret enemies and upon systems suitable in war not only for the control of spies, but of all civilians and non-combatants, especially of aliens, which come under British rule during a war; so that they may help and not hinder British operations.<sup>1</sup>

In chapter two, the Secret Service Bureau's structure showed how important the development and implementation of legislation was to Kell and how it manifested itself in valuable resources and manpower being invested in the Preventive Branch.

The work of the Preventive Branch, as therein laid down, includes, in general and before everything else, the Policy of measures for preventing espionage; the Military policy in dealing with the police authorities and the civil population, including aliens; and the initiation and examination of legislative proposals relating to counter-espionage, and the executive schemes and instructions for the application of measures for counter-espionage and the control of aliens and undesirable persons.<sup>2</sup>

Kell's remit in 1909 was to prove or disprove the idea of German spies operating within the British Isles. However, his action of dividing the Bureau into two branches from its inception, one dedicated to the investigation of espionage and the other to the prevention of espionage, shows long term strategic commitment. The quickest path to success would have been to throw all his available resources at proving a network of German spies and

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<sup>1</sup> Imperial War Museum: The Papers of Major General Sir Vernon Kell (PP/MCR/120 Reel 1).

<sup>2</sup> TNA: KV 1/ 35 "F" Branch report. The prevention of espionage.



saboteurs in the short term and gaining approval for a permanent structure long term before moving onto legislative activities. Lord Hankey's comments that the Secret Service Bureau was: 'a small but highly efficient organisation,' and that: 'Within a very short time the organisation set-up had justified its existence.'<sup>3</sup>

The reason for Kell's confidence in tackling both investigations and preventions at the same time so soon after its set-up could be down to changing government attitudes and thinking around war. Asquith, in his book *The Genesis of War*, stated that 1909 was a change of direction for the CID from one of investigations into a possible war with Germany to the task of preparation for war.<sup>4</sup> Therefore the original remit and creation of the Secret Service Bureau by a standing sub-committee had been during a period of theoretical debates, free thinking and possibilities. By the time the Bureau was physically up and running, thinking had narrowed in focus to actual practical steps in the preparation for a future war.

The CID played a pivotal role in the pre-war period in the development of enemy alien legislation. After establishing the Secret Service Bureau by a sub-committee appointed to consider questions of foreign espionage in the United Kingdom, another sub-committee was assembled in 1910 to review and plan for the treatment of aliens in time of war.

Later in 1911, the CID created a principal standing committee to co-ordinate the many other standing sub-committees in the production of a War Book. The War Book incorporated all the agreed predetermined action and responsibilities for the contingency of a future war. The Committee on the Co-ordination of Departmental Action on the Outbreak of War was chaired by the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office and included the permanent heads of all government departments and officers from the Admiralty and the War Office. The recognition and driving force for the War Book has been laid at the feet of the secretariat of the CID, Maurice Hankey. Hankey described the war book's compilation as:

Every conclusion of the committee of Imperial defence, every report of a sub-committee, as soon as it had been approved by the parent committee and the government departments concerned, was passed on to a special organisation, which assigned responsibility for action required to give effect to each decision to the appropriate government department. Each government department had a chapter in the war book, which contained a summary of all the action to be taken

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<sup>3</sup> M Hankey, *The Supreme Command 1914-1918, Vol.1* (London, 1961), p.116

<sup>4</sup> Asquith, *The Genesis of War*, p.117

by the department on the outbreak of war, together with a synopsis of the corresponding and simultaneous action to be taken by other government departments.<sup>5</sup>

Updated annually, by June 1914 the red-covered volume had grown to three hundred and eighteen pages. On reading the quarto in 1914, Asquith commented that the War Book had 'reached a remarkably high standard of completeness' and noted:

Indeed, by then the draft Orders in Council accompanied the King wherever he went in time of profound peace, as well as being kept set up in type in the printer's office, so that on a sudden outbreak of war they could be circulated and put into operation at a moment's notice.<sup>6</sup>

In his history of the CID, Nicholas d'Ombrain rated Hankey's work on the war book as an undertaking that: 'served a useful function in seeing to it that the machinery of government was prepared to cope with the many tasks that would be imposed upon it in time of war.'<sup>7</sup>

Kell and his Bureau in this 'preparation period' were trying to influence preventive legislation through the sub-committee for the treatment of aliens in time of war, and also the policy that would be put forward to be included in the war books. At the same time, pressure from the Committee on the Co-ordination of Departmental Action on the Outbreak of War was brought to bear for an agreed interdepartmental action plan on alien policy. Poor co-operation between the War Office, Admiralty and the Home Office, behaviour highlighted in the early meetings of the CID up to 1909, give an indication that this would not be a simple task.

The sub-committee for the treatment of aliens in time of war in 1910 was chaired by Churchill and supported by Rear-Admiral Sir C.L. Ottley as Secretary. The makeup of the sub-committee equates to those who had had an interest in the success or failure of the Secret Service Bureau; namely the Home Office, the Foreign Office, the War Office and Admiralty.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hankey, op. cit., p.118.

<sup>6</sup> Asquith, *The Genesis of War*, p.118.

<sup>7</sup> N d'Ombrain, *War Machinery and High Policy: Defence administration in peacetime Britain 1902-1914* (Oxford, 1973), p.21.

<sup>8</sup> Committee members in 1910 were: The Viscount Esher, Sir Charles Hardinge (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Sir Edward Troup (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs), Sir Laurence Guillemard (Chairman, Board of Customs and Excise), Mr A. H. Dennis (Assistant Solicitor to the Treasury), Rear-Admiral the Hon A.E. Bethell, C.M.G. (Director of Naval Intelligence), Brigadier-General A.J. Murray (Director of Military Training).

At its first meeting, on 7 July 1910, a proposal from the General Staff picked up on the conclusions agreed by a previous sub-committee that had been appointed in 1909 to consider the questions of foreign espionage in the United Kingdom. As well as agreeing to establish the Secret Service Bureau, the 1909 sub-committee had examined the Official Secrets Act of 1889, concluding that:

“The Official Secrets Act, 1889” is the code under which we derive our present powers, and it is the opinion of the Sub-Committee that great need exists for amending this Act in order to make it an efficient weapon in dealing with espionage.<sup>9</sup>

Conclusions drawn in 1909 on foreign espionage stated that:

The Sub-Committee therefore recommend that a Bill should be brought in at an early date to amend “The Official Secrets Act, 1889,” in the manner suggested by the Home Office, and Sir Henry. They are of the opinion that such a Bill would excite less opposition if it were introduced by the Secretary of State for War than by the Home Office.<sup>10</sup>

The General Staff used two memoranda at the July 1910 meeting, one on ‘the power we possess if dealing with aliens’ and a second on ‘historical instances of the treatment of aliens in time of war’ to build on the conclusions of the earlier sub-committee.<sup>11</sup> After the presentation, having used examples of German espionages from the files of Kell’s Secret Service Bureau, the General Staff proposed three courses of action.

- (1) The amendment of “The Official Secrets Act, 1889,” so as to give power of arrest without previous reference to the Attorney-General, and the power of search.
- (2) The registration at all times of all aliens arriving in this country.
- (3) The enactment of a measure conferring upon the Executive in time of war powers similar to those provided under “The Aliens Act, 1803.”<sup>12</sup>

The first proposal to amend ‘The Official Secrets Act, 1889,’ was approved by the sub-committee with little debate or controversy. Inefficiencies of the old act were amended and re-written to place the onus on the accused to prove their actions were purely innocent in nature. The new drafts for the act included sections on penalties of spying, wrongful communications and information, definition of a prohibited place, power to

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<sup>9</sup> TNA: CAB 16/8 Report and proceedings of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. [Sir Edward Henry, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police].

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> TNA: CAB 16/25 Report and proceedings of a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

arrest, penalty for harbouring spies, search warrants and restrictions on prosecution. Proposals for the changes were then sent to Sir Arthur Thring at the office of the Parliamentary Counsel in the House of Commons where they were drawn up into a draft Official Secrets Bill.

In July 1911 John Seely, MP for Ilkeston and Under Secretary of State for War, led the bill through the House of Commons and Lord Haldane, Secretary of State for War, steered the legislation in the House of Lords. Maurcie Hankey said of Seely: 'Seely carried this through all its stages by a coup de main in an empty and unsuspecting House on a Friday afternoon, a masterly example of Parliamentary strategy.'<sup>13</sup> Seely, looking back on the day in question, remembered:

I got up and proposed that the bill be read a second time, explaining, in two sentences only, that it was considered desirable in the public interest that the measure should be passed. Hardly a word was said and the bill was read a second time; the Speaker left the Chair. I then moved the Bill in Committee. This was the first critical moment; two men got up to speak, but both were forcibly pulled down by their neighbours after they had uttered a few sentences, and the committee stage was passed. The Speaker walked back to his chair and said: "The question is, that I report this Bill without amendment to the House." Again two or three people stood up; again they were pulled down by their neighbours, and the report stage was through. The Speaker turned to me and said: "The third reading, what day." "Now, sir," I replied. My heart beat fast as the Speaker said: "The question is, this Bill be read a third time." It was open to any one of all members in the House of Commons to get up and say that no bill had ever yet been passed through all its stages in one day without a word of explanation from the minister in charge.<sup>14</sup>

Standing in the House of Lords at the second reading of the Bill to re-enact the Official Secrets Act, 1889, with amendments on 25 July, Lord Haldane told his peers:

As I have said, the bill is not directed against anybody in particular, but applies to our own people as well as people of other nations. If I were asked whether there is much espionage in this country I should say that foreign Governments direct espionage in this way very little indeed; but I do believe that a great many zealous people of all nationalities are anxious to obtain information by which they may recommend themselves to their Governments, and that there is a great temptation to people with expert knowledge to acquire this information. I have certain knowledge of persons – who may have done it, and probably did do it, in an entirely private capacity – making maps which they ought not to have made, and it is not desirable that that power should remain unchecked. This Bill is a carefully considered attempt to deal with the suspect on an official footing. I hope it is a Bill which will commend itself to your Lordships as not being brought in through

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<sup>13</sup> Hankey, op. cit., p.118.

<sup>14</sup> J Seely, *Adventure* (London, 1930). p.145.

any excess of caution, but merely one which, with the necessary evolution of matters, we have now reached.<sup>15</sup>

During his speech Lord Haldane made reference to examples of where difficulties of the 1889 Act were inadequate in bringing offenders before the courts. These examples had been extracted from a report drawn up for the Secretary for State of War by the prevention of espionage branch of the Secret Service Bureau in May 1911. The report for Lord Haldane, direct from the files of the bureau, highlighted twenty two cases of suspected espionage.

Most of these cases occurred in Kent, Essex, and the East Anglian counties, of which the German General Staff were known to have compiled a 21/2 inch map and a gazetteer giving details as to the number and location of carts and draughts animals, position and maximum capacity of bake houses, and many other matters of importance to an invading army.<sup>16</sup>

Along with the examples referred in to Lord Haldane's speech, three of the case summaries have survived in the file of the MI5. Case one involved a man called Herr Lindhal found wandering the defences of Harwich in May 1910. Reported by the Staff Officer of the Harwich defence, Lindhal had been in the area for two weeks 'sketching along the river Stour and walking over the marshes south west of Dovercourt' where new moorings for nucleus crew destroyers were being planned. Lindhal's activities were reported to the bureau, but as there were no powers to deal with the man under the 1889 Act or warn him to leave the area, no further action could be taken. The second case was reported to the bureau through letters from the Garrison Adjutant, Dover, in December 1910. It involved a German school teacher called Stephen who had been seen on more than one occasion acting suspiciously around Fort Burgoyne in Dover. The fort had recently been armed with 9.2 and 6 inch guns. When interviewed by the Dover Garrison Adjutant the school teacher explained he had been observing birds. The school teacher was let go and no search was carried out as the authorities in Dover could not keep him in custody on any specific charge. Case number three came from a letter received at the War Office in May 1909 from a Mr Glassmacher. Mr Glassmacher, a German by birth, worked as a foreman for a company of electrical mining machinery makers in Newcastle. He had been approached by a German called Wiseman and asked to work for the German Secret Service by supplying information on the construction of dreadnoughts from his

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<sup>15</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 9 (1911), col. 641-7. [25 July]

<sup>16</sup> TNA: KV 1/ 35 "F" Branch report. The prevention of espionage.

engineering colleagues. Unfortunately, no further information is given about the case and its conclusions.<sup>17</sup>

These three examples from the twenty-two cases provided by the Secret Service Bureau to Lord Haldane are not from general members of the public gripped in spy mania, but from creditable witnesses in professional situations. Two of the reports come from military personnel who would have been trained to watch for the unusual and are less easily dismissed as 'flimsy'. The quality of reporting and cases going through the Secret Service Bureau appears to have improved from the days of Edmonds and his 'obvious forgery' to the sub-committee on foreign espionage in 1909.<sup>18</sup>

After a third reading on 2 August 1911 in the House of Lords, the Official Secrets Bill was read in the House of Commons for the first time on 17 August, and for the second and third time on the following day. Royal Assent was given to the bill on 22 August 1911. In February 1912, six months later, Heinirch Grosse became the first person to be tried under the Act. On hearing of the Royal Assent given to the Official Secrets Act, Kell noted: 'the work of counter-espionage is thereby greatly facilitated'.<sup>19</sup> From the vantage point of 1930, Major-General Seely acknowledged the role of the Official Secrets Act in the development of the Secret Service Bureau.

It is common ground amongst the students of the late war, that the British Secret Service was the best organised, and most ready for war and the most successful of them all. But the striking success of the Secret Service, acknowledged by friend and foe alike, could never have been achieved unless the Official Secrets Act had been passed almost without comment on that fateful day.<sup>20</sup>

Two further proposals put before the treatment of aliens in war time sub-committee in July 1910 had a much longer path to full realisation. Theirs was not a simply route to adoption, in contrast with the changes made to the Official Secrets Act. To justify their second proposal for the registration at all times of all aliens arriving in the country the General Staff: 'pointed out that the practice prevails in many foreign countries, and is of material value, both as furnishing a means of discovering the designs of suspicious aliens and as being likely to act as a check upon their conduct.'<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.56-57.

<sup>19</sup> Hennessey & Thomas, op. cit., p.32.

<sup>20</sup> Seely, op. cit., p.146.

<sup>21</sup> TNA: CAB 16/25 Reports and proceedings of the standing sub-committee of Committee of Imperial Defence on the Treatment of Aliens in time of war.

Prior to the sub-committee meeting, a memorandum on the proposal from the General Staff had been shared with the Home Office for comment. Sir Edward Troup, the representative for the Home Office, had submitted comments on the alien register to the meeting as an appendix for discussion.

If this means that all aliens are to be registered as they arrive, it would be an enormous and useless task. Some 500,000 to 600,000 aliens arrive every year, but of these a great majority are transmigrants, visitors, tourists, or aliens already settled who have merely travelled abroad. Except in the case of returning residents, registration on arrival would not enable them to be traced afterwards - many of those newly arriving, even when they intend to stay here, do not know where they will permanently settle - and the registration would hamper ordinary traffic to an extent that it would be intolerable, particularly at cross-channel ports, where it would practically be impossible. It is assumed, therefore, that what is meant is the registration of all aliens resident in the country.<sup>22</sup>

The Home Office concluded that the general registration of aliens in the United Kingdom was not possible, and that expense incurred in carrying out such an enormous task would outweigh any benefits. They therefore suggested that if powers were given by Parliament, a workable solution might be:

- (1.) To secure a permanent register of all aliens in certain areas, such as naval bases and, perhaps, in the Eastern and South-Eastern counties.
- (2.) To take a complete register at the outbreak of war of all subjects of enemy nationality. This would be a much easier task than registering all aliens; for example, in 1911, only 20 per cent of the resident aliens were Germans, and about 7 per cent were French.

It would be possible to combine these two uses of the power - to keep a permanent register of aliens in certain areas, and to enforce in these and wider areas the registration of all aliens at the outbreak of war.<sup>23</sup>

Colonel MacDonogh disagreed with the Home Office assessment of the work that would be required to register aliens: 'The General Staff considered that it would not be sufficient merely to register aliens residing in certain districts, and a system of universal registration appeared to be the only satisfactory manner of dealing with the question.'<sup>24</sup> However, by the end of the first meeting, the General Staff's proposal for the registration of aliens in peace time led to an informal compromise with the Home Office. It was believed that there was not the appetite for full registration legislation and that any bill would meet with much opposition in parliament. The compromise was a draft aliens restricted areas bill that provided for the registration of aliens in certain naval and military areas alongside

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

an agreement by the Home Office to a system of informal registration through close co-operation of the police, the military authorities and the War Office for areas not covered in the bill.

The third proposal for a draft bill that dealt with aliens in a time of grave national danger, similar to powers within the Aliens Act of 1803, was agreed by the sub-committee. In a time of war all enemy aliens would be required to leave the United Kingdom within a fixed time period and all aliens would be prohibited from entering the United Kingdom. Revealed in the minutes of the meeting around the debate on the draft aliens removal bill are the seeds of internment. There was a realisation that it was not in the interest of homeland security to deport all enemy aliens en masse. The Home Office suggested:

That it would be undesirable to prohibit enemy subjects from leaving the country on the outbreak of war, as their surveillance would be a burden, and that it might be better that all enemy subjects – and, indeed, all suspicious aliens – should be cleared out of the neighbourhood of fortresses and ports, and, perhaps, out of the counties on the coast specially exposed to invasion, where they might commit or assist in committing acts of demolition, or might join an invader with information as to military movements.<sup>25</sup>

This line was slightly at odds with the position taken by Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for Home Affairs and chair of the sub-committee. He alluded to the fact that internment of certain categories of enemy alien could be used as a negotiating position:

After the outbreak of war it would be easy to deal with aliens of enemy nationality. We might imprison those of military age, and hold them as hostages, if such a course was considered desirable.<sup>26</sup>

The War Office's Colonel MacDonogh wanted a free hand to decide the fate of aliens:

In time of war the General Staff desire to have a free hand to deal with aliens, to expel them, to prevent them from leaving the country or landing in it, or to name areas in which alone they may reside.<sup>27</sup>

Already in 1910 there were underlying differences surfacing between the War Office and the Home Office on how enemy aliens should be dealt with in a war situation that. These were masked by common agreement on policy in the sub-committee. The conclusions of the sub-committee were contained in a draft aliens removal bill that would: 'allow the departure on the outbreak of war of all enemy subjects, except those definitely suspected

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



of espionage.’ They also recommended that: ‘all persons not taking advantage of the permission to leave the country should be placed under restrictions, on the grounds that their intention to remain may be connected with an unfriendly motive.’<sup>28</sup>

By the time of the second meeting, in March 1911, of the sub-committee of the CID into the treatment of aliens in time of war, their recommendations had been sent to Sir Arthur Thring, Parliamentary Counsel. The office of Parliamentary Counsel consisted of a team of specialist lawyers responsible for drafting government bills for their introduction into Parliament and Thring drew up the draft legislation for the two bills and the amended clauses for the Official Secrets Act (1911).

However, even while the Parliamentary Counsel was busy drafting the Aliens Removal Bill, the debate as to its content continued in correspondence between the individual committee members. Rear-Admiral Bethell wrote to the sub-committee’s secretary, Sir Charles Ottley in February 1911:

I certainly think there should be powers in the Removal Bill to prevent aliens leaving the country. There are certain aliens capable of giving valuable information or acting as guides or pilots who certainly should not be allowed to join the enemy. Powers are also required to compel suspicious aliens during strained relations or war to reside in certain localities where they should be placed under surveillance.<sup>29</sup>

Bethell’s letter emphasised the alignment of the Admiralty and War Office on the issue of enemy aliens and their deportation on the outbreak of any hostilities. It also emphasised that the public facing conclusions of the sub-committee were not replicated in a consensus amongst the individual members.

In the eight months since their first meeting, it appeared that the sub-committee’s members had had second thoughts around the proposed draft aliens restricted area bill. Churchill, in his introduction to the meeting on 31 March 1911, expressed a view that the aliens’ area bill ‘presented much greater difficulties. It was long, and would affect a great many people’. His remarks then opened the floodgates as fellow members of the sub-committee voiced their concerns. Bethell thought the bill was ‘impracticable’, Esher felt that the bill’s chances of getting through Parliament were ‘quite hopeless’ and Troup thought that the scope of the informal registration could be extended as an alternative. Only General Murray and Lieutenant-Colonel MacDonogh continued to argue for compulsory registration of aliens in pre-defined restricted areas. MacDonogh said: ‘he

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> TNA: CAB 17/90 Treatment of Aliens in war 1909-1913.

thought the resident alien was a real danger. Though some were undoubtedly detected, he did not feel confident that all who were mischievous were known. The compilation of a secret register by the Police would not have the same deterrent effect.’<sup>30</sup>

The conclusions drawn by the second meeting of the sub-committee were that the draft alien removal bill in its current form was flawed. Its practical implementation was likely to cause much inconvenience to large areas of the country and professional spies could get round the bill’s stipulations by just relocating outside prescribed restricted areas. There had also been discussions of including a provision for the registration of aliens in the Official Secrets Act, 1911. However, this idea was dropped as members were worried its inclusion might impede the passage of the Official Secrets Act through Parliament. The sub-committee’s other major concern was around the bill’s own passage through Parliament.

The draft Bill to provide for the registration of aliens in certain areas appeared to be confronted with formidable Parliamentary difficulties on account of its length and provisions, and it was doubtful whether the advantage it secured would ever balance the expenditure of time necessary for its passage.<sup>31</sup>

Importantly, at the second meeting of the sub-committee on the treatment of aliens in war, it was decided that presently, in 1911, Parliament and the public had no appetite for a bill solely focused on the official registration of all aliens residing in the United Kingdom or just those aliens in areas of military or naval significance. The sub-committee hoped that a compromise could be found where restriction provisions might be made possible by being tacked onto one of two other bills on the subject of aliens going before Parliament in the 1911 session.

Events in January 1911 brought the issue of aliens at large in the British Isles to public notice when two members of a gang of Latvian refugees were besieged on Sidney Street in the East End of London. A month earlier this gang of Latvian refugees had been part of an attempt to rob a jeweller’s shop in Houndsditch that resulted in the deaths of three policemen who were trying to arrest them. An excited crowd gathered on 3 January to watch two-hundred policemen cordon off the street and a detachment of Scot’s Guards move in on the alien suspects held up in a house. Even Home Secretary Churchill ventured to Stepney to take personal charge of the situation. After a siege of over six

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<sup>30</sup> TNA: CAB 16/25.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

hours, the house containing the suspects caught fire and the two suspects were later found dead.

In a letter written on the day of the Sidney Street siege to Asquith, Churchill wrote: 'I think I shall have to stiffen the Admin of the Alien Act a little, & more effective measures must be taken by the police to supervise the dangerous classes of aliens in our midst.'<sup>32</sup> This is exactly the opposite to Churchill's actions just two months later at the treatment of aliens in time of war sub-committee, where he counsels against the draft Aliens Restricted Area Bill. Maybe Churchill's inaction lay in the hope that alien restriction provision could be added to other bills that were due to be considered and debated by Parliament.

A private members' bill on aliens, tabled by Mr Edward Goulding, the Conservative MP for Worcester, was read for a second time in the House of Commons on 28 April 1911. The draft bill sought to amend the Aliens Act of 1905, and was by ten M.P.s.<sup>33</sup> What is striking about this group, using the German and Austrian immigrant population representing the geographical spread of aliens around the United Kingdom, is that of the ten M.P.s, only four of their constituencies were likely to have any high concentrations of aliens within them. German and Austrian aliens tended to reside in large urban areas such as London (Holborn) and Birmingham (Dudley) and ports such as Liverpool (Walton) and Grimsby.

Introducing the bill, Goulding used the Sydney Street siege as a reason for more alien legislation:

This result was achieved at considerable expense and loss of lives of two of our brave police and the wounding of others, and I maintain also the humiliation of the State which formed a topic of ridicule amongst people in Europe and the United States. Public opinion since that date, and to-day, demands that the law shall be amended so as to prevent a repetition of so unnecessary a peril, which concerns private safety and also the credit of this country.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> R Churchill, *op. cit.*, p.1033.

<sup>33</sup> Sir George Doughty, Liberal Unionists MP for Great Grimsby, Mr Frederick Edwin Smith, Conservative MP for Walton (later the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Birkenhead), Mr James Remnant MP for Holborn, Sir Gilbert Parker, Conservative MP for Gravesend, Colonel Griffith-Boscawen, Conservative MP for Dudley, Viscount Wolmer, MP for Newton, Lancashire, Sir Charles Hunter, MP for Bath, Colonel Yate, Conservative MP for Melton, Leicestershire, and Mr Oliver Locker-Lampson, Conservative Unionist MP for Ramsey Division in Huntingdonshire.

<sup>34</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.24 (1911), col. 2107. [25 July 1911].

Clause 1 of Goulding's private members bill proposed the full registration of aliens in Britain to help in the prevention of crime. That aliens be subject to inspection under the Aliens Act of 1905 and be required to register their place of residence. Other clauses dealt with expulsion orders, alien overcrowding and employers using aliens as cheap labour at the expense of the British workforce. Reactions to the bill were largely negative and show just how unwilling Parliament was in 1911 to venture down the route of wholesale alien registration. It would appear from the barometer of debate created by Goulding's bill that the Committee of Imperial Defence sub-committee had been right not to move forward on the proposed draft aliens restricted area bill.

Ramsay MacDonald, Labour MP for Leicester, told his fellow members in the House of Commons:

The proposal of hon. Members opposite, and I am not now going to deal with mere Committee points, consists mainly and almost exclusively in this, the registration of aliens. What good is that going to effect? You can accumulate waste paper as much as you like, but every registered immigrant, if you are going to touch him at all, has got to commit a crime. When he has committed a crime, you have got to trace him and to discover that he committed the crime. After the most difficult and intricate parts of your police inquiry and your detective work have been accomplished then it may be that your registration may help you to connect up certain links in your chain. This colossal system of police registers, this troublesome provision compelling law-abiding, decent aliens to go in hundreds to the nearest police stations to register their names, is a proposal absolutely alien to the most fundamental conceptions of English civic liberty, and the obligations of English civic law. It is perfectly true that in some other countries we have got this registration, but is not that what we all object to. Is not the sort of military systematic mechanical reduction of all the free and spontaneous civic life of those countries one of the blots in the life of those countries.<sup>35</sup>

Mr Stephen Gwynn, MP for Galway added:

I may say that the traditions of the party to which I belong have never led us in the direction of supporting the extension of special powers to the police in order to exercise espionage. On the contrary, our efforts have been directed more to removing such powers. This House would be taking a reactionary step in giving to the police any further right to interfere with foreign immigrants than they have at present. I deprecate altogether scare legislation.<sup>36</sup>

Mr Llewellyn Atherley-Jones, Liberal Party MP for Durham North Western concluded:

I can only say that if this anti-alien legislation was supported on the ground that there was exceptional and dangerous crime among the aliens of this country, and

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<sup>35</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.24 (1911), col. 2147. [25 July 1911].

<sup>36</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.24 (1911), col. 2162.

it was necessary to protect the body politic from foreign criminals, then it would be a different matter; but if I can satisfy hon. Members opposite that the converse of that proposition is true, I do not think I need trouble very much about the economic question.<sup>37</sup>

Churchill, in summing up the debate, agreed with the House's concerns over alien registration.

I am quite certain that the proposals in regard to registration are impracticable, and that if they were practicable they would not be worth the money and trouble that they would cost. The definition of an alien immigrant which figures in the Bill now before the House is not confined to the class which is now actually inspected, but applies to all passengers other than first-class passengers and trans-migrants.<sup>38</sup>

Churchill then focused on the points that had been reviewed by the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence and planted the seed for registration of those aliens in areas of national security.

I think the hon. Member for Leicester [Mr Ramsay MacDonald] very effectively demolished the Registration Clause, and I am quite clear that if this Bill goes to a Committee it must be with the understanding that this Clause must be deleted altogether upstairs. I am willing to admit that there may be some case for registration of aliens resident in the areas of our ports. There are grounds which perhaps would make it desirable that we should have some knowledge of the resident alien population at our great dockyards and military harbours; and I know importance is attached to that by the military authorities, and I say nothing at the present time which is entirely opposed to such a provision.<sup>39</sup>

Edward Goulding's private members' bill confirmed the conclusions of Churchill and the treatment of aliens in war time sub-committee on the country's appetite for such measures. The sub-committee gained valuable feedback and lessons without being directly associated with the bill. The public may have still been gripped by spy mania, but its hold was not firm enough to turn that fear into Parliamentary support for alien registration. Paul Addison goes so far as to say that anti-alien fever was in decline in 1911 and because of it, 'Both bills were allowed to lapse on the pretext that no parliamentary time was available.'<sup>40</sup>

The day after the bill's second reading Churchill wrote to the King:

It is not a good bill as it stands, but it is capable of unlimited amendment; & as the prospects of securing Government time for the Bill on the same subject which

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<sup>37</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.24 (1911), col. 2167.

<sup>38</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.24 (1911), col. 2171.

<sup>39</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.24 (1911), col. 2162.

<sup>40</sup> P Addison, *Churchill on the home front 1900-1955* (London, 1992), p128.

has official authority, are very small, Mr Churchill induced the House to pass this Bill on to the Grand Committee with the intention of altering it there to meet ministerial views. The Young Conservatives who are pressing the Bill quite understand this plan and are glad to have a chance of legislating albeit on a modest scale. The great bulk of the supporters of the Government voted against the Bill and Reading, but enough followed Mr Churchill's advice to secure its acceptance. The further conduct of this measure will require careful management but Mr Churchill is not without hopes that a useful Bill may eventually emerge from the manoeuvring.<sup>41</sup>

Churchill's hopes for careful management in the drive for a useful bill were short lived as, in October 1911, his attention and focus moved to Admiralty affairs, being replaced at the Home Office by Reginald McKenna.

A book called *The Alien Problem and its Remedy* by M Landa, published in the summer of 1911, continued the debate over measures against the aliens residing in Britain.<sup>42</sup> Landa first focused on the history of aliens in Britain and the many resulting Government inquiries, Select committee reports, and Royal commissions on alien immigration that led up to the passing of the Alien Act in 1905. He then considered the extent of the alien influx in relation to standards of living, crime and economics of alien labour. The problem, according to Landa, was that:

The public has been taught to draw hasty conclusions from isolated instances and exceptional events, which, evil though they are in themselves, are unduly magnified and embellished until they arouse passion and create panic.<sup>43</sup>

In the second part of the book, Landa focuses on the current legislation resulting in the Aliens Act of 1905 and then debates how to reform it. Using official census figures from 1901 and 1911, Landa concludes that alien immigration was in decline. Landa states: 'All the statistics put forward in this volume demonstrate the cruelty of the reckless exaggeration that has marked the anti-alien campaign for years.'<sup>44</sup> A review of Landa's book in *The Economic Journal* for 1911 concludes:

To the proposal of the latter "that every alien subject to be inspected under the Act of 1905 should be required to register his place of abode," our author replies that "registration in effect means that nothing more nor less than the re-introduction of the passport system, and the essence of a passport system is that there shall be no exemption"; in other words, Mr. Goulding would introduce a modified system of police supervision that would ultimately extend to all citizens, until we had approximated to some of the most objectionable Continental models.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> R Churchill, op. cit., p.1072.

<sup>42</sup> M Landa, *The alien problem and its remedy* (London, 1911).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.viii.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.289.

<sup>45</sup> *The Economic Journal*, Vol.21, No.83. (Sep, 1911). p.408-441.

By the time the book had been published, the public's interest in immigration and alien issues had shifted on to more pressing domestic crises. A wave of 872 strikes in the summer of 1911, known as the 'Great Unrest' spread throughout Britain and, in August, a national rail strike brought the country to a standstill.

With attention diverted elsewhere during the 'Great Unrest', the Sub-Committee dealing with the treatment of aliens in war time did not meet up again until autumn 1912. Working behind the scenes, the sub-committee's secretary, Hankey engineered the smooth transfer of the chairmanship from Churchill to McKenna and gained the approval of the Prime Minister for the new appointment. In preparation for the sub-committee's next meeting, a select group came together on the 15 October 1912 for preliminary discussion of the issues on the table. Held in the Second Sea Lord's room, the group consisted of the Second Sea Lord, the secretary, the Chief of Staff and the assistant secretary. Five provisional conclusions were arrived at by the group; provision for the control of aliens in Naval bases, supervision of Naval and Military Officers of foreign powers when visiting the British Isles, regulations for the use of harbours without warning by foreign men of war, disclosure of technical naval details in the press, and impressment of transports in a time of war.

The third meeting of the sub-committee took place on Monday 21 October 1912. As well as the change in committee chair, Captain Hankey took the place of Sir Charles Ottley as secretary. There were also changes in representation from the Foreign Office with Sir Eyre Crowe, assistant under-secretary, and from the Army Brigadier-General David Henderson joining the committee meetings. In its vault, the committee had two draft pieces of legislation on which it could draw: the Aliens Restriction Bill, dealing with the treatment of foreigners in time of war; and the Aliens (Restricted Areas) Bill, imposing upon aliens resident in certain areas the obligation of self-registration.

The draft Alien Restriction Bill that had been approved by the sub-committee in 1911 was placed in storage to await a "favourable opportunity". Once the opportunity arose, the Government would enable the bill by an Order in Council and present it to Parliament.<sup>46</sup> This meant that in a time of war or imminent national danger, the bill could be quickly enacted by Parliament, giving aliens a limited time period in which to leave the country and prohibiting aliens from entering the country. There was also room in the order, depending on the situation, to limit the definition of 'aliens' to any nationality or

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<sup>46</sup> TNA: CAB 17/90 Treatment of Aliens in war 1909-1913.

group of nationalities. Penalties for aliens contravening the order included a fine of up to one hundred pounds, and aliens failing to comply with the order faced up to six months imprisonment. However it had not yet been determined by the sub-committee whether the recommended imprisonment should be with or without hard labour.

The draft Aliens (Restricted Areas) Bill to impose self-registration on alien residents in certain areas of the British Isles had stalled in so-called “Parliamentary difficulties”. Throughout its development, a recurring question was asked as to the advantage self-registration of aliens would secure over the expenditure and use of resources to implement the bill in practice. In its discussion of the draft bill at the sub-committee’s October 1912 meeting, the group came to the conclusion that the only way the bill would successfully pass through Parliament was if it was introduced as a war measure. McKenna also added, ‘that agitation by the press would be the best preliminary to its success.’<sup>47</sup> This implies the bill needed to wait for public opinion, through the press, to catch up with the sub-committee conclusions and demand self-registration of aliens. The bill was entrusted to the War Office and given the responsibility for its submission to Parliament when a favourable opportunity arose.

In the general discussion, Colonel MacDonogh again put forward the issue of restricting enemy subjects from returning to their own country. He feared that among these aliens there might be spies and ill-disposed individuals returning to their own countries with valuable military, naval or topographical information of the British Isles that foreign Governments could find useful in a state of war. Sir Eyre Crowe of the Foreign Office argued for complete expulsion of aliens:

There would be fewer people needing supervision if a general exodus were permitted. The potential danger lay in the numbers remaining in the United Kingdom. The majority of German subjects would be likely to leave without forced expulsion.<sup>48</sup>

The minutes also record General Henderson’s view on restricting enemy aliens of military age, as such returning subjects could swell opposing military resources.

What the War Office desired was to prohibit enemy subjects between the ages of 16 and 60 from leaving the United Kingdom unless furnished with a permit. Failing this, they would be content that facilities should be given during the first few days of war for the enemy subjects to leave the country, provided that, after

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<sup>47</sup> TNA: CAB 16/25 Report and proceedings of the standing sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the Treatment of Aliens in time of war.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



the expiration of the time limit, they should be kept under surveillance, and not permitted to leave the country without a pass.<sup>49</sup>

Understandably, with a difference of opinion amongst the members, the sub-committee recommended a catch all solution. Its third meeting concluded that: 'it was in the interest of the country for all enemy subjects to leave it on the outbreak of war'. However, for any remaining enemy aliens restrictive measures would be placed upon them and that after a certain date no enemy alien subjects would be allowed to leave the United Kingdom without a permit.

By 24 October, Hankey had communicated the sub-committee direction with the Treasury Chambers and engaged the Parliamentary Draughtsman to draft orders-in-council revisions of the Aliens Removal Bill that would be required to take effect in wartime. A new clause: 'where any person suspected on reasonable grounds of being a subject of an enemy power be detained, the onus of proving his nationality shall rest on the person so detained' was added.<sup>50</sup> Also included in the revisions were the Admiralty and War Office agreed details on the ports of entry for aliens, the boundaries for areas of restrictions and the treatment of enemy ship pilots.

The Sub-committee in 1913 met twice, on 24 July and 7 August. Hugh Godley from the Parliamentary Counsel's office was present at both of the meetings. Again, the drafts of the bill and Order in Council were discussed and updated. What is interesting about the two pieces of legislation in waiting is that neither of them explicitly refers to the power for full-scale enemy internment, but rather the ability to arrest, detain or restrict the movement of enemy subjects. The strong steer from the sub-committee was the desirability, in a time of national danger or war, to expel all aliens belonging to the enemy's nationality. The exception to this were any male aliens liable to military service against Britain if they returned to their country of origin. These aliens were to be detained in the United Kingdom.

A paper included as an appendix to the August meeting of 1913 gives a summary of the work being carried out by the Kell's Bureau with the Chief Constables of seventy-two counties and forty-four boroughs around England, Scotland and Wales. The paper

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> TNA: CAB 17/90 Treatment of Aliens in war (1909-1913).

entitled 'summary of results of informal alien registration to July 1913' notes the total number of aliens on the Secret Service Bureau's records at 28,830.<sup>51</sup>

Before any further meetings of the sub-committee could take place in 1914, the country found itself at war with Germany. On 5 of August, a day after the declaration of war, McKenna stood up in the House of Commons and introduced the draft Aliens Restriction Bill and order-in-Council: 'to impose restrictions on aliens, and make such provisions as may be necessary or expedient for carrying such restrictions into effect.'<sup>52</sup> The 'favourable opportunity' for the recommendations of the sub-committee assigned to the pages of the war book in draft form, back in 1911, had presented itself.

McKenna continued his speech by emphasising to the House the bill's main objective, to restrict the movement or assist in the removal of aliens resulting in the detention of spies that may be at large in the alien population. He then went on to link the introduction of the bill with the recent arrest and detention of suspected spies that had taken place in the previous forty-eight hours. Finally, before opening the floor up to questions, McKenna reassured members of the House that the orders in the bill had been so constructed, 'to cause as little inconvenience as possible to alien friends, while leaving effective control over dangerous enemy aliens.'<sup>53</sup>

With no questions asked, McKenna then asked that the House dissolve itself into a committee so the Bill could clear the committee stage, in which detailed examination of the Bill took place. On this occasion the operative clauses were quickly read out to the chamber by the deputy speaker, John Henry Whitley, Liberal MP for Halifax.

The Act prohibited aliens from landing in or embarking from the United Kingdom and set the wheels in motion for the deportation of aliens from the United Kingdom. Twelve ports were approved to process any aliens attempting to enter or leave the United Kingdom.<sup>54</sup> All other ports around the United Kingdom were prohibited to aliens. The Act also required aliens to reside and remain in certain districts, prohibited aliens from specified areas and set down registration requirements for aliens. Aliens had to register with their nearest police station providing their nationality, birth place, age, sex, occupation, and place of residence and business. A photograph was also required and, in

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<sup>51</sup> TNA: CAB 16/25 Report and proceedings of the standing sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the Treatment of Aliens in time of war.

<sup>52</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.65 (1914), col. 1986. [05 August 1914]

<sup>53</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.65 (1914), col.1987.

<sup>54</sup> These were Aberdeen, Bristol, Dundee, West Hartlepool, Holyhead, Liverpool, Hull, London (Tilbury), Greenock, Folkestone, Falmouth, Dublin and Rosslare.

some circumstances, finger prints. Aliens were required not to travel more than five miles from their registered place of residence.

After three rapidly answered questions from the floor, the motion was put before the House that the bill be read a third time. At this juncture the MP for Salford North, Sir William Byles, raised concerns over the power the bill gave to the Home Secretary at the expense of the House of Commons and asked how this power might be safeguarded. With one further point of clarification on the issue of spies, the bill was read for the third time and passed.

On the same afternoon in the House of Lords' chamber, the Marquess of Crewe, Lord Privy Seal, Secretary of state for India and Liberal leader in the House of Lords, set out the aliens restriction bill to the assembled peers during a first reading.<sup>55</sup> Crewe explained: 'One of the main objects of this measure is either to remove, or to restrict the movements of undesirable aliens with a special view to the removal and detention of spies'.<sup>56</sup> He went on to reassure the House of Lords with his summary of the bill's impact:

The arrangements which the Order contemplates have been found so far as possible to cause as little inconvenience as may be in all the circumstances to alien friends, while securing effective and, if necessary, severe control over alien enemies.<sup>57</sup>

The bill found no opposition in the House of Lords during its first reading and moved quickly through a second and final third reading before the bill was passed.

Panayi highlights the importance of what was debated and approved by the House of Commons and House of Lords that day. 'As a piece of legislation which allowed the introduction of subsequent amendments without the permission of Parliament, new Orders in Council constantly strengthened the provisions of the Aliens Restriction Act.'<sup>58</sup> In the period 1914 to November 1916 there were seventeen orders in Council and six orders of the Secretary of State imposing further restrictions on aliens which strengthened the Aliens Restriction Act. The orders of the Secretary of State for the Home Office tended to focus on changes to the approved ports list and extensions to the prohibited areas that aliens could not reside in or travel into unless they had official exemption. Changes to the Aliens Restriction Act through Orders in Council tended to reflect the

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<sup>55</sup> Mr Robert Crewe-Milnes.

<sup>56</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Lords 5<sup>th</sup> series vol.17 (1914), col.384-5. [05 August].

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst*, p.52.

issues and intelligence reports on the threats of the day. The Act was consolidated once in 1914, on 9 September and, again in 1916, on 29 February.

The effects of the alien restriction legislation were felt almost immediately and Georgina Lee, a well-to-do London housewife, recorded its impact in her diary on 8 August 1914.

Today serious measures are being taken to hunt out German spies. All Germans still in England have to report themselves to the police. Several successful raids have been made on suspicious houses and any arms or ammunition was removed by the police.<sup>59</sup>

The United States ambassador to the United Kingdom, Walter H Page, also noted the impact in a letter to President Woodrow Wilson on Sunday 9 August.

Three enormous German banks in London have, of course, been closed. Their managers pray for my aid. Howling women come and say their innocent German husbands have been arrested as spies. English, Germans, Americans - everybody has daughters and wives and invalid grandmothers alone in Germany. In God's name, they ask, what can I do for them?... Every day Germans are arrested on suspicion; and several of them have committed suicide.<sup>60</sup>

The second piece of legislation that would assist the Secret Service Bureau in its quest was laid before Parliament on 7 August 1914. Standing before the House of Commons just three days after he had introduced the Aliens' Restriction Act, Reginald McKenna asked: 'I beg to move, "That leave be given to introduce a Bill to make Regulations during the present war for the Defence of the Realm." I ask leave to introduce another emergency Bill, the object of which, while it is important, is extremely simple.'<sup>61</sup>

The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) was another piece of precautionary legislation that had been drafted by a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence as part of the compilation of the war book. Dusted down and put before the House clause 1 of the bill sought to define the powers of the authorities in relation to seizing resources and censorship for Britain's war effort.

His Majesty in Council has power during the continuance of the present War to issue Regulations as to the powers and duties of the Admiralty and Army Council, and of the members of His Majesty's Forces, and other persons acting on His behalf, for securing the public safety and the defence of the Realm; and may by

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<sup>59</sup> G Roynon (ed), *Home Fires Burning, the Great War Diaries of Georgina Lee* (Stroud, 2006), p.8.

<sup>60</sup> B Hendrick, *The life and letters of Walter H Page: volume I* (London, 1923), p.306 & 308.

<sup>61</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.65 (1914), col.2191. [07 August].

such Regulations authorise the trial by courts-martial and punishment of persons contravening any of the provisions of such Regulations designed.<sup>62</sup>

The regulations included ones to prevent people communicating with the enemy, to prevent the spread of false reporting and the requisition where necessary of factories, workshops and labour for the production of ammunition and war equipment. Again like the Aliens Restriction Act, DORA allowed the introduction of subsequent amendments without the assent of Parliament through new Orders in Council. During the period of war the Defence of the Realm Act was consolidated six times and numerous additional regulations, called 'D notices' were issued in the name of national security. The difference between DORA and the Alien Restriction Act legislation meant that it was applicable to all inhabitants of the British Isles, not just a defined enemy alien population. It also had an impact on civilians' everyday life with D notices leading to the watering down of beer, restrictions on public houses' opening hours and the introduction of British Summer Time (BST).

Examples of D notices relating to the Secret Service Bureau included D92, issued on 6 November 1914, which forbade reporting of the court martial and execution of German spy Karl Lody (lifted four days later). With the arrest of German spy Carl Frederick Muller on 25 February 1915, D167 was issued, banning the reporting of his arrest.<sup>63</sup> D375, issued on 3 April 1916, banned the publication of chess problems in newspapers, unless it had been ascertained that the senders were of British nationality. Its issue stemmed from MI5 intelligence that coded information was being passed through the published chess problems to Germany or Germans in Britain.<sup>64</sup>

With the outbreak of war, the draft orders, bills and policies, crafted and debated over many years by sub-committees of the Committee of Imperial Defence and documented in the war books, were enacted and enshrined in legislation. However, the logistics necessary to implement the legislation, or even a common understanding of the impacts in acting out the new legislation, had not been considered or accounted for across government departments.

The implementation hurdles of the Aliens Restriction Bill were suddenly realised as the country headed closer to war at the end of July 1914. Hurried meetings and interviews took place between representatives of the Home Office and the Secret Service

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<sup>62</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol.65 (1914), col.2192.

<sup>63</sup> N Wilkinson *Secrecy and the Media: the Official History of the United Kingdom's D-Notice System* (Oxford, 2009). p.496.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.510.

Bureau (then MO5) to discuss preparations for the administration of the bill. They met on three occasions between 29 July and 1 August. The reason for the suddenness of the meetings is noted by Sir Henry Wilson, then Director of Military Operations, in his diary on 28 July 1914.

At 3 p.m. a note came to Douglas from Asquith ordering the "Precautionary Period". This we did, I don't know why we are doing it, because there is nothing moving in Germany. We shall see. Anyhow it is more like business than I expected of this Government.<sup>65</sup>

Captain Holt-Wilson simply noted in his diary a day later, "'War precautionary stage' declared by Brit Govnt.'<sup>66</sup>

At the first meeting, on the 29 July, the Assistant Secretary from the Home Office confessed to the MO5 representative that: 'At that date, no executive details had been drafted by the Home Office, who welcomed the assistance of the Bureau.'<sup>67</sup> At the meeting it was agreed that Part I of the bill relating to the restrictions on aliens entering and leaving the United Kingdom would be left to the Home Office to enforce. This included alien permits, definitions of approved and prohibited ports, and the detention of aliens embarking in the United Kingdom. However as it was more complicated to implement Part II of the bill, which focused upon the restrictions of aliens in the United Kingdom, the Bureau representative agreed to prepare suggestions for the Home Office to revise before any instructions were issued to Chief Constables.

At the second meeting on 31 July 1914, the representative from the Bureau provided examples of stationery and registration forms that would be needed under the restriction order by the Home Office. It agreed the type of registration information that would be transmitted back to the Bureau from Home Office registration officers out in the field. In the last meeting, on 1 August 1914, the Bureau representative and Home Office Assistant Secretary worked with the Scottish Office to agree amendments necessary to the proposed bill to take account of Scottish law, so it could be enforced in Scotland.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> C Callwell *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson; His life and diaries*, Vol.I (London, 1927), p.152. [General Sir Charles Douglas, Chief of the Imperial Staff].

<sup>66</sup> Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives: Papers of Sir Eric Edward Boketon Holt-Wilson (Diary of EHW MS Add.9794).

<sup>67</sup> TNA: KV 1/66 Draft report on the Aliens Restriction Act 1914 and orders made there under (March 1917).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Even with these meetings, the rapidness of the outbreak of war found the Home Office unprepared to fully implement a scheme for a register of aliens or to put the draft Aliens Registration Act into force. To help, the section head of MO5(f) [later MI5F] Captain Holt-Wilson, was seconded to the Home Office in early September. Holt-Wilson was responsible for the co-ordination of general policy on aliens and issues arising from the Aliens Restriction Act and DORA with all Government departments. An 'H' branch report, written in 1921, documenting the origins and growth of MI5, boasts of Holt-Wilson's work at the Home Office to administer the Aliens Restriction Act.

Captain Holt-Wilson accordingly spent about ten days at the HOME OFFICE in helping to get this carried out, and it is principally to his efforts that the success of this measure at the outset is due.<sup>69</sup>

Once the fog of war had descended in early August 1914, the interaction of government departments over the Aliens Restriction Acts and where responsibilities lay became very blurred and confused. It did not help that the expected mass exodus of enemy aliens at the outbreak of war, that the CID sub-committee for the treatment of aliens in time of war predicted, failed to materialise. War had been declared on the Tuesday after a bank holiday in Britain, leaving foreign holiday-makers stranded and unable to return to the continent. However, German reservists would have had some forewarning when Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August and the Kaiser announced the mobilisation of the army.

The recommended enemy alien policy of the Secret Service Bureau was clear at the outbreak of war. Any enemy aliens within the British Isles found to be in prohibited areas would be removed and all German and Austrian males of military age would be detained as prisoners of war. This policy was backed up in a War Office telegram sent to the Home Office and commands at home on 7 August 1914. It ordered the detention of any German and Austrian males aged between the ages of seventeen and forty-two.

Even before the distribution of the War Office telegram, German reservists were already being rounded up and detained as William Mansfield, later made Viscount Sandhurst in 1917, records in his diary for 5 August 1914:

Already nearly a hundred wounded Germans and prisoners are in Harwich, while Germans returning to Germany as Reservists, etc., are arrested and sent to a camp

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<sup>69</sup> TNA: KV1/ 49 "H" Branch report. Organisation and administration 1900-1919.

at Horsham. The papers give accounts of Germans arrested in various places as spies.<sup>70</sup>

It is difficult to dismiss Mansfield's account as speculation or rumour as, in 1914, he was Lord Chamberlain of the Household. The Lord Chamberlain was at that time responsible for organising royal court functions. He was likely to be more connected and informed than the average civilian, and his summary indicates early internment policy in action. Christ's Hospital School in Horsham was also the site of an early German internment camp used in 1914 and 1915 to house six hundred and thirty German prisoners.

A day after the War Office telegram had been delivered on 8 August, its orders were suspended due to Home Office and Foreign Office concerns over the instructions. Discussion then took place between the War Office and the Home Office to agree a new set of instructions which were immediately redistributed by the Home Secretary to police chief constables and all home commands. The internment of every male enemy alien of military age was scaled back to the arrest of 'enemy subjects as were reasonably suspected of being in any way dangerous to the safety of the Realm.'<sup>71</sup> The telegraphic instructions went on to elaborate:

Show every consideration to prisoners compatible with safety stop

Be careful not to arrest persons whose known character precludes suspicion or who are personally vouched for by British residents of standing stop

Any aliens arrested already should be released if known character is good or if vouched for by British residents of standing stop

Under Secretary, Home Office.<sup>72</sup>

By 13 August 1914, the number of persons interned in the United Kingdom stood at 1,980.

Later in August the Home Office arranged a conference on 'the disposal of male subjects of enemy states' for the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>. The conference delegates included representatives from the Foreign Office, War Office and police.<sup>73</sup> It is interesting to note here that the British diplomat representing the Foreign Office, Sir Eyre Crowe, had been

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<sup>70</sup> Viscount Sandhurst, *From day to day 1914-1915* (London, 1928), p.3.

<sup>71</sup> TNA: KV 1/66 Control of aliens including CID sub-committee: M.I.5 policy matter 1916-1917.

<sup>72</sup> TNA: KV 1/65 Control of aliens including CID sub-committee: M.I.5 policy matter 1914-1915.

<sup>73</sup> In attendance: Sir Eyre Crowe from the Foreign Office, Sir Edward Troup and Mr John Pedder from the Home Office, Lieutenant Colonel MacEwan, Major Kell and Captain Holt-Wilson from the Military Operations Branch, War Office, Colonel Ray and Major Byrnes from the Adjutant General's Branch, War Office, and Sir Henry commissioners of Police for the Metropolitan Police of London.



born in Leipzig and educated in Germany, coming to England aged just seventeen. Throughout the war the press would attack his character and question his suitability for a position with the Foreign Office as he was half-German. The presence at the conference of Major Kell and Captain Holt-Wilson from the Secret Service Bureau, representing Military Intelligence, is also interesting. They had suddenly stepped out from the shadows of the Director of Military Intelligence, Colonel George Macdonogh, and the Deputy Director, Colonel George Cockerill, who had typically represented Military Intelligence and General Staff in sub-committee meetings before the outbreak of war. No doubt Macdonogh and Cockerill were pre-occupied, following the General Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force through France and Belgium.

Top of the agenda for the conference was the number of male enemy aliens at large in the country. Captain Holt-Wilson presented figures to the delegates, taken from the registration statistics of enemy aliens under the Aliens Restriction Act. 5,810 enemy aliens were already registered and recorded as being reservists of German or Austrian nationality within the United Kingdom. A further 3,400 were currently held within prisoner of war camps. Holt-Wilson estimated that the number of reservists at large was likely to increase by up to 700 as more registration returns came in. Of the possibly 6,510 reservists at large, 4,297 were residing in London.

Sir Edward Henry, Police commissioner, then reported to the conference that: 'there was a feeling of uncertainty amongst the public which he shared regarding the advisability of allowing such a large number of enemy reservists to be at large in the Metropolis.' He went on to state that he was in favour of: 'keeping in some place of restraint all enemy subjects of military age.'<sup>74</sup>

It was at this point in the conference that Major Kell and Captain Holt-Wilson from the Military Operations branch pointed out that Sir Henry's call for restraint of all enemy subjects of military age had been the original arrangement recommended by them at outbreak of war. It was only because of a veto by the Home Office and Foreign Office that the original arrangement was watered down to the instructions issued by the Home Secretary on 8 August 1914.

The immediate wholesale arrest and internment debate continued, focusing on legal implications, the possible destitution of Germans and Austrians being thrown out of employment, possible acts of violence against enemy aliens at large by locals in the

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<sup>74</sup> TNA: KV 1/65 Control of aliens including CID sub-committee: MI5 policy matter 1914-1915.

communities they lived within, and the current arrangements made for the internment of prisoners of war. In what little consensus was achieved during the conference, delegates agreed that the current prisoner of war camps were unsuitable for civilian enemy aliens, and that separate camps should be constructed where civilian enemy subjects could be collected under supervision. The sticking point to this proposal was 'who should be responsible for carrying out these arrangements and for the expense entailed thereby.'<sup>75</sup> The conference broke up with the Home Office representatives stating that it was impossible for them to construct any civilian camps, as the legal power to do so lay with the military authority. This impasse was further complicated by the Adjutant General's representatives refusing to agree to the Home Office's assertion without the authority of the Army Council.

A day after the conference, Troup at the Home Office sent a letter to Lieutenant General Sir Henry Sclater, Adjutant-General and member of the Army Council, to seek his opinion.

There are 4,500 Germans reservists in London and Sir Edward Henry thinks that, as their means of living fail, they will become a source of danger. I have spoken with Mr. McKenna and he approves of their being arrested provided that the war office can undertake to hold them as prisoners of war.<sup>76</sup>

The Adjutant-General was an important linchpin to have onside, as his responsibilities included developing the Army's personnel policies, discipline, organisation and medical services. Without his support there would not have been any Army resources to guard and service new internment camps. Discussions and debates on the subject of internment continued to be batted backwards and forwards between the interested governmental departments for a month and a half, until a meeting of the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence into the treatment of aliens in time of war.

The sub-committee meeting of 17 October 1914 was chaired by McKenna and attended to by Captain Hankey as secretary.<sup>77</sup> Unlike the Home Office conference on the disposal of male subjects of enemy states, the opinion of the sub-committee was clear; that the policy of interning aliens of military age, already carried out to some extent,

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. [Letter from Edward Troup to the Adjutant-General, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1914].

<sup>77</sup> Since its last meeting in more peaceful times, the composition of the sub-committee had changed. Joining the old hands of Viscount Esher and Troup (Home Office,) were Mr John Pedder (Home Office) Sir Llewellyn Smith (Permanent Secretary, Board of Trade), Mr Fountain (Board of Trade), Admiral Sir Jackson (Admiralty), Mr Browning (Board of customs and Excise) and from the War Office Lieutenant-Colonel Cockerill, Lieutenant-Colonel Kell, Major James, and Captain Holt-Wilson.

should be completed. The sub-committee came to seven conclusions and recommendations.

- (1) All male Germans and Austrians of military age, subject to definite exceptions in the public interest, should be interned.
- (2) All male Germans and Austrians not of military age should, subject to exceptions in the public interest, be sent to Germany and Austria.
- (3) Female Germans and Austrians and children under 16 should not be deported, except in cases of suspicion.
- (4) The powers given by the Defence of the Realm Regulations to move persons whose behaviour is suspicious should be extended to cases where suspicion arises from the person's alien parentage.
- (5) An Act should be passed requiring persons so moved to be registered in the same way under "The Alien Restrictions Act, 1914."
- (6) The prohibited areas should be extended so as to include the whole of the East Coast and the South Coast from Dover to Southampton.
- (7) Belgian refugees should not reside, except on the special circumstances, in a prohibited area on the East or South coast, or any part of Norfolk or Suffolk.<sup>78</sup>

By 20 October, the conclusions of the Sub-Committee were a topic of debate for Asquith's Downing Street cabinet meeting. Liberal Member of Parliament for Bristol East and Postmaster General within Asquith's cabinet, Charles Hobhouse, noted in his private diary for 20 October 1914: 'After some harmless recriminations between K. with W. S. C. and McK. [Kitchener, Churchill and McKenna] we agreed to arrest tonight every German and Austrian of military age, in all about 23,000 persons.'<sup>79</sup> In Asquith's letter to the King, George V, summarising cabinet meetings for 20, 21 and 22 October, he reported back on the enemy alien situation and internment.

10 Downing Street

Whitehall SW

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. [Report of Sub-Committee (previous C.I.D paper 181-B.)].

<sup>79</sup> E David (ed) *Inside Asquith's Cabinet: from the diaries of Charles Hobhouse* (London, 1977), p.200.

The question of Home Defence, and the possible German incursions either by way of invasion or of raid, has occupied the attention of the cabinet. Mr Churchill is confident that any operation of the kind, on more than insignificant scale, is doomed to disaster. Lord Kitchener is still disposed to think that, in the event of a 'stalemate' position in the two military fields, the Germans may contemplate invasion with a large force – say 150,000 or even 200,000 men.

Mr McKenna reported that there are still at large in the United Kingdom some 23,000 German & Austrian subjects of military age, 9000 having been already put in confinement. In view of the earlier / leaner approach of the German forces, the whole of the 23,000 will be similarly dealt with, instalment after instalment, as soon as, from time to time, the home office authorities are able to provide for them.<sup>80</sup>

During the evening of 20 October, after the cabinet meeting in the morning, Sir Edward Troup at the Home Office issued a letter to all Chief Constables detailing instructions on the resumption of the internment of alien enemies of military age. The letter concluded with some timescales for the task at hand: 'The Secretary of State hopes that it will be possible to arrest and intern all alien enemies of military age in the course of the present week.'<sup>81</sup> The results of the October 1914 internment push were 16,800 civilians entering detention and an immediate shortage of accommodation for the military authorities to house them in.

Just two days later, on 22 October, the Adjutant General at the War Office asked the Home Office for a suspension of arrests until more suitable accommodation could be provided. This situation of stop, start internment while more accommodation was found continued into 1915. By October 1915, MO5 estimated that 39,900 male alien enemies of military age had been interned, representing 84.8% of the male alien enemy population in Britain.

Panayi's assessment of the first few months of war was that plans did not exist for the internment of alien enemies:

The roundup of civilians in Britain did not proceed smoothly, as the policy went to fits and starts in the early stages of the war. In fact, immediately before the outbreak of the conflict no plans existed in the internment of Germans and other

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<sup>80</sup> Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: Papers of Herbert Henry Asquith, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Oxford and Asquith (Cabinet letters to the King, 1908-16, shelf mark: MS Asquith 7)

<sup>81</sup> TNA: KV1/ 65 Control of aliens including CID sub-committee: M.I.5 policy matter 1914-1915 [letter Home Office to Chief Constable, 20 October 1914].

alien enemies. Instead, the committee of Imperial defence had decided in August 1913 to allow all enemy subjects to leave, except for those suspected of spying.<sup>82</sup>

His assertion that the roundup of civilians did not proceed smoothly is a correct one, however, it would be unfair to state that no plans existed for the internment of enemy aliens.

The policy recommendation from the Secret Service Bureau had always been to intern male alien enemies of military age, but the practicalities of implementation, in consultation with the Home Office and other government departments, had not been ironed out. At the outbreak of war, the programme of internment was still in its infancy and was always going to be dependent on suitable accommodation in which to house internees being found. The Committee of Imperial Defence sub-committee on the treatment of aliens in war had, in 1910 and 1911, discussed the ideas of imprisoning those of military age and the General Staff's desire to have a free hand dealing with aliens they wished to prevent leaving the country. During the pre-war sub-committee meetings it had been shown that internment had been used to control enemy aliens during wartime and that an international legal precedent had already been set by the French. From 1803 onwards, the French, during the Napoleonic wars, had detained British subjects of military age. The conclusions of the sub-committee had been that those enemy aliens not wishing to leave the country in a time of war would be placed under restrictions. Those restrictions included internment.

An MI5 branch report on the developments in the prevention of espionage written in 1921 emphasised the role MI5 had in championing internment in the control of enemy aliens.

Internment is by far the strictest and most valuable of all the controls and the S.I.B. has always pressed for the internment of enemy subjects "en bloc", arguing that, in order to receive the privileges of exemption, an individual born in an enemy country should be compelled to prove not only that he has not done anything to assist the enemy, or even is unlikely to do any such thing, but that he is actually hostile in thoughts, words and deeds to his native land. It is contended that, as things are nowadays, there are so many ways of doing harm - espionage being the chief - that a normally constituted enemy subject cannot be regarded while at large as a potential danger to military security.

This principle, of interning all doubtful cases, has been accepted in theory by the Government from the first. We shall see, however, in subsequent chapters that, apart from the delays caused by the lack of accommodation, there had been a consistent tendency on the part of the civil authorities to interpret the principle in a manner which the S. I. B. is bound to consider quite unjustifiably lenient.

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<sup>82</sup> Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, p.46.

Towards the end of the war chiefly or partly as a result of newspaper agitation, the government decided to take a stronger line, and two military members were at last appointed to the Advisory Committee. Nevertheless, it remains true that, throughout much of the greatest part of the war, the situation was such as to give rise to a real anxiety even after the majority of male enemy aliens had been interned.<sup>83</sup>

By the end of 1915, the majority of male enemy aliens of military age had been interned or given exemption from internment because it was in the national interest.

Instructions written by Edward Troup to chief constables, in September 1914, clarified which enemy aliens could be exempt from internment in the national interest:

- (a) Persons who are engaged in carrying on industries which are necessary for this country:
- (b) Persons whose detention would involve loss of industrial employment to British subjects:
- (c) Persons who hold public or educational appointments.<sup>84</sup>

Of course, in each individual case for exemption the police had to be satisfied that: ‘the person has no hostile intentions or desires.’<sup>85</sup> Enemy aliens that applied to be exempt from internment also had to provide two sureties who could vouch for them. These sureties had to be British born residents of good standing and be able to provide a bond of between £25 and £50. The conditions of the bond were:

- (a) The released person shall be of good behaviour, shall not in any way assist or attempt to assist the enemy, and shall apply with the terms of the Aliens’ Restrictions Order.
- (b) That the sureties shall, if required by the Police, produce the released prisoner within 24 hours.<sup>86</sup>

Once the national interest had been served, in the form of internment or exemption, it left “F” branch of MI5 free to continue recommending amendments to the Aliens Restriction Act. When these were approved, “F” branch were on hand to implement and advise on changes to the orders of the Aliens Restriction Act. The following table highlights amendments to the Aliens Restrictions Act through to November 1916.

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<sup>83</sup> TNA: KV 1/35 “F” Branch report: prevention of espionage 1914 to 1918.

<sup>84</sup> TNA: KV1/65 Letter from Edward Troup to Chief Constables, 7 September 1914.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

Table 13. Aliens Restrictions Act amendments, 1914 to November 1916.<sup>87</sup>

Title	Date	Contents
The Aliens Act, 1905	1905	Restrictions on immigration of aliens and deportation of undesirable aliens
The Aliens Restriction Act, 1914	5 August 1914	Statutory power to impose restrictions on aliens in national emergency.
The Aliens Restriction order, 1914	5 August 1914	General restrictions
British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914	7 August 1914	Code of law of British nationality, naturalization, loss of British nationality, and status of aliens.
The Aliens Restriction (no 2) Order, 1914	10 August 1914	Prohibition of banking by alien enemies.
The Aliens Restriction (no 3) Order 1914	12 August 1914	Variation of approved ports, additions to prohibited articles and areas, minor amendments.
The Aliens Restriction (no 4) Order, 1914	20 August 1914	Prohibition of newspapers in enemy language to aliens enemies.
The Isle of Man (War Legislation) Act, 1914	28 August 1914	Statutory power to extend emergency Acts to Isle of Man
The Alien Restriction (Consolidation) Order, 1914	9 September 1914	Consolidation with amendments and revocation of Orders dated 5,10,12 and 20 August 1914.
Order in Council	30 September 1914	Extension of Aliens Restriction Act, 1914, to Isle of Man
The Aliens Restriction (Isle of Man) Order, 1914	30 September 1914	General restriction in Isle of Man
The Aliens Restriction (change of name) Order, 1914	8 October 1914	Prohibition of change of name by alien enemies.
Order of Secretary of State (under Article 6.)	23 October 1914	Addition of Southampton to approved ports
Order of Secretary of State (under Article 18(2))	23 October 1914	Addition to and variation of prohibited areas
The Aliens Restriction (change of name) Isle of Man Order, 1914	10 November 1914	Prohibition of change of name by aliens enemies in Isle of Man
Order of Secretary of State (Under Article 18(2))	11 November 1914	Addition of certain London docks to prohibited areas
The Aliens Restriction (Belgian refugees) Order, 1914	28 November 1914	Restrictions on Belgian refugees
Order of Secretary of State (under Article 1(3))	11 December 1914	Removal of Aberdeen and West Hartlepool from list of approved ports.

<sup>87</sup> TNA: KV1/65 Alien Restrictions: a chronological list of various acts and orders affecting aliens (6<sup>th</sup> November 1916).

The Aliens Restriction (Armenians etc) Order, 1914	7 January 1915	Exemptions of friendly Turkish subjects from provisions applicable to alien enemies.
The Aliens Restriction (amendment) Order, 1915	13 April 1915	Requirement of passports for alien passengers. Registration by hotel keepers.
The Aliens Restriction (Isle of Man) Amendment Order, 1915	6 July 1915	Registration by hotel keepers.
The Aliens Restriction (seamen) Order, 1915	28 July 1915	Restrictions on landing and provisions for registration of alien seamen.
Order of Secretary of State (under preceding)	28 August 1915	Application of preceding Order to named ports.
The Aliens Restriction (amendment) Order, 1916	27 January 1916	Extension of registration in prohibited areas to all aliens. Requirement in prohibited areas of identity books. Amendment of provisions relating to registration by hotel keepers.
The Aliens Restriction (consolidation) Order, 1916	29 February 1916	Consolidation and revocation of Orders dated 9 Sept, 8 Oct, and 28 Nov, 1914, 7 Jan, 13 April, and 28 July 1915, and 27 Jan 1916.
Amending Order in Council (22A)	30 March 1916	Restriction on importation from abroad of aliens for munitions work.
Order of Secretary of State (under Articles 12A and 19A)	15 April 1916	Application of provisions as to landing and registration of seamen to named ports.
Amending Order in Council.	27 June 1916	Prohibited of attestation of identity books in blank. Interpretation of "lodging house". Exemption of alien friends serving in British or Allied forces from restrictions on aliens friends.
Amending Order in Council.	7 July 1916	Power of discrimination among classes of aliens friends in grants of exemption from registration in specified areas.
Amending Order In Council (22B)	7 September 1916	Restrictions on importation from abroad of aliens for work other than munitions works.
Amending Order in Council	6 November 1916	Power to revoke or limit deportation order. Constitution of registration districts as units for prohibited areas. Omission of special restrictions on Belgian refugees entering prohibited areas.



The amendments and consolidation of orders mirrors the issues and fears of the day. With a large proportion of the male enemy alien population detained in internment camps, the spotlight then moved onto naturalised British males of hostile origin. In October 1915, there was estimated to be a population of 6,238 naturalised British males of hostile origin within the British Isles, of which some 26 had been interned. The activity relating to the introduction of alien restriction orders within the Isle of Man coincided with the proposal from the Destitute Aliens Committee and Home Office to site internment camp on the island. By the end of September 1914, the Isle of Man had received its first 200 internees.<sup>88</sup> Throughout September and October 1914, the country witnessed an influx of up to two hundred thousand Belgian refugees escaping German occupation. Consequently, new orders were introduced to appease fears that amongst the innocent victims of war there might be German spies hiding.

Finally, from 1915 into 1916, the alien restrictions were gradually extended to cover all alien subjects, including aliens from neutral and friendly countries. As the number of Aliens Restriction Act amendment orders and DORA D-notices issued increased so too did the resources of Branch F at MI5:

During the war, it grew to be a comparatively large body [F branch], employing hundreds of persons, conducting thousands upon thousands of investigations, and putting forth measures of control that directly affect every single person travelling or sending correspondence to or from foreign countries, and indirectly, make some difference, great or small, to the life of almost every inhabitant of the United Kingdom.<sup>89</sup>

By 1917, the Preventive Branch of MI5 started to explore visions of the future state of aliens in a post-war world. Whether or not MI5 had predicted an early end to the war, more and more time was being devoted to drafting and working out the necessary post-war alien restriction legislation. The catalyst for this focus came from Asquith's formation in June 1916 of a sub-committee of the Reconstruction Committee. Titled the Enemy sub-committee, its original terms of reference were:

To consider the questions which will arise at the end of the war out of the presence in this country of persons of enemy nationality, and, in particular, whether repatriation is desirable, and, if so, in what cases.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Y Cresswell (ed), *Living with the wire: Civilian internment in the Isle of Man during the two World Wars* (Douglas, 1994), p.10.

<sup>89</sup> TNA: KV 1/35 "F" Branch report. The prevention of espionage.

<sup>90</sup> TNA: KV1/ 67 Control of aliens including CID sub-committee: M.I.5 policy matters 1918-1927 [Report of the Aliens Committee 25<sup>th</sup> January 1918].

In January 1917 the sub-committee changed its name to the “Aliens sub-committee” and its terms of reference were extended to include and consider:

- (a) The questions which will arise at the end of the war in connection with the presence in this country of persons of enemy nationality, and whether the repatriation of such persons is desirable, and if so, in what cases.
- (b) What restrictions, if any, should be imposed after the war on the admission of aliens into this country and their residence here.
- (c) Whether any changes in the law or practice of naturalization have been shown by the experience of the war to be required in the public interest.<sup>91</sup>

The sub-committee was chaired by Sir George Cave (Home Secretary) and included the now promoted Lieutenant-Colonel Holt-Wilson representing the War Office and specifically the work of M.I.5 in his capacity as head of the Preventive Branch MI5F.<sup>92</sup>

The conclusions from the sub-committee on 25 January 1918:

- (1) That enemy aliens at present interned be repatriated compulsorily at the end of the war, subject to an appeal to a Committee appointed by the Home Secretary, and, if possible, presided over by a Judge of the High Court.
- (2) That the cases of uninterned enemy aliens be also reviewed at the end of the war with a view to the compulsory repatriation of those who cannot without disadvantage to this country be permitted to remain. Persons uninterned whom it is proposed to repatriate compulsorily should have an appeal to the same Committee as that which deals with the appeals of persons interned.
- (3) That the Committee, in deciding appeals, should have regard, primarily, to the consideration (a) whether the appellant has such ties with this country that he is, or is likely soon to become, practically British, and (b) whether the appellant's sympathies have been shown to be on the side of the Allies.
- (4) That a general system of alien registration, together with measures to regulate the admission and expulsion of undesirables, be established at the end of the war. This system should be based on the experience gained in the war, and should be created by means of Orders in Council on the lines of the draft annexed, to be made under an amended and extended Aliens Restriction Act.
- (5) That should a policy of the total exclusion from the United Kingdom of the subjects of the present enemy countries, or some of them, be adopted after the war, it should be enforced by the methods of Part III. of the draft Order in Council annexed.
- (6) That the existing law as to naturalization be amended by the introduction of a power to the Secretary of State on the advice of a Judicial Committee to revoke certificates in cases of disloyalty or criminality.
- (7) That the existing practice as to naturalization as it existed before the war be modified by (a) continuing for the period of five years after the conclusion of peace the policy adopted during the war of not granting naturalization to persons of German nationality except for special reasons of national interest, (b) requiring German applicants when their cases are dealt with to make an express

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Other committee members included Sir Edward Troup (Home Office), Sir James Dodds (Scottish Office) Mr H Read (Colonial Office), Mr H Malkin (Foreign Office), Mr J Ferard (India Office), Mr A Lowry (Local Government Board) and Mr J Williams from the Home Office as committee secretary.

declaration to the effect that they have not obtained, and do not intend to apply for permission to retain, their original nationality under German law, (c) requiring a fuller account than was usual before the war as to the previous history of applicants for naturalization and giving effective public notice by advertisement of all applications.<sup>93</sup>

These conclusions later formed the foundations for the 1919 Alien Restrictions Act presented to Parliament in December 1919.

From its pre-war beginnings, providing intelligence and assessments on the threat operating within the United Kingdom for the CID sub-committee to base its enemy alien policy decisions on, MI5 during the war became the authoritative governmental heart of all things to do with enemy alien legislation. Once the mass internment of male enemy aliens of military age had largely been achieved, by the end of 1915, enemy aliens ceased to be a threat. From this point onwards, people who still rallied behind the enemy aliens as a real security threat were either under an illusion or perpetrating the illusory nature for their own advancement. MI5 accordingly moved its resources to the threats its intelligence indicated were a greater priority. They worked at co-ordinating enemy alien policy across the British Empire, tightened restriction legislation to aliens from neutral and friendly countries, and spent a great proportion of their time investigating pacifist propaganda and tracking British Bolshevik sympathizers. However, by the end of the war the conclusions drawn by the Aliens Sub-Committee which would form the foundations for the 1919 Alien Restrictions Act still perceived enemy aliens as a threat that warranted their compulsory mass deportation. This suggests that policy and legislation decision-making, at least where enemy aliens were concerned, was no longer based on intelligence reporting alone, as it had been at the beginning of the war.

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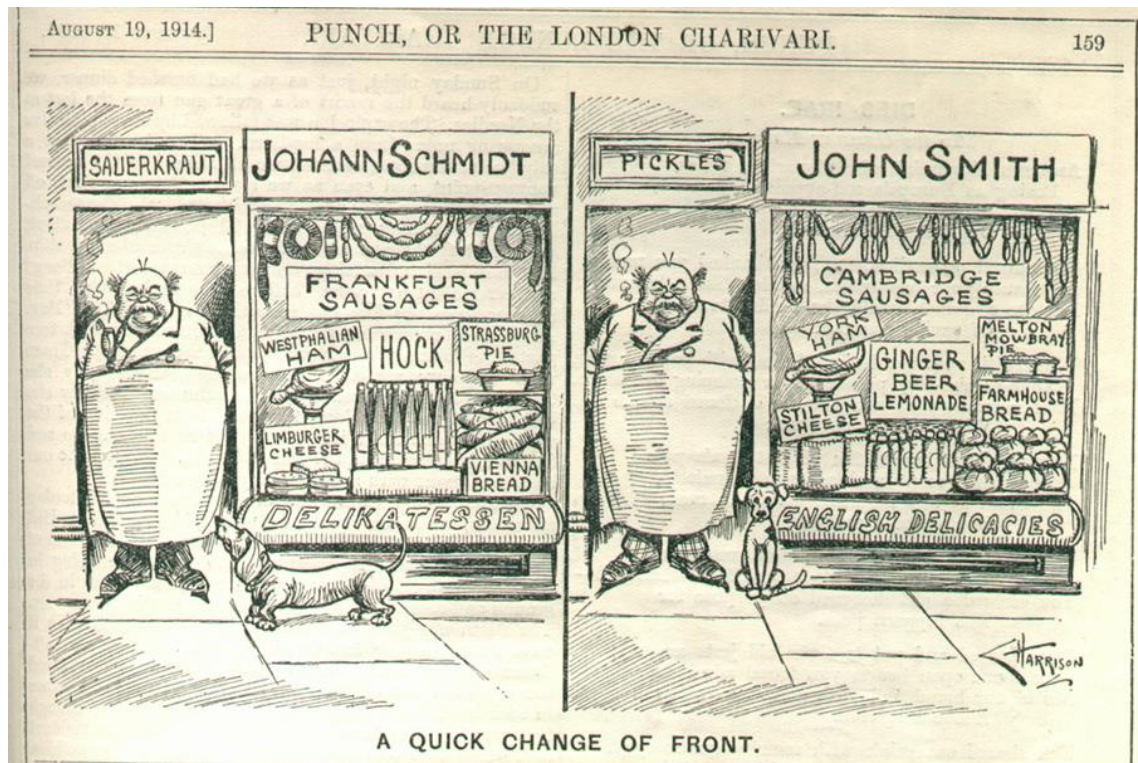
<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter Five**

**The enemy alien issue and public opinion: from ‘A Quick Change Of Front’ to ‘At Last, By George!’ 1914-1918.**

On 19 August 1914, *Punch* magazine published a cartoon that summarises the impact of war on the German community in Britain. ‘A Quick Change Of Front’ demonstrates how almost overnight the familiar German influences on the high streets of Britain disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 10. A Quick Change Of Front.



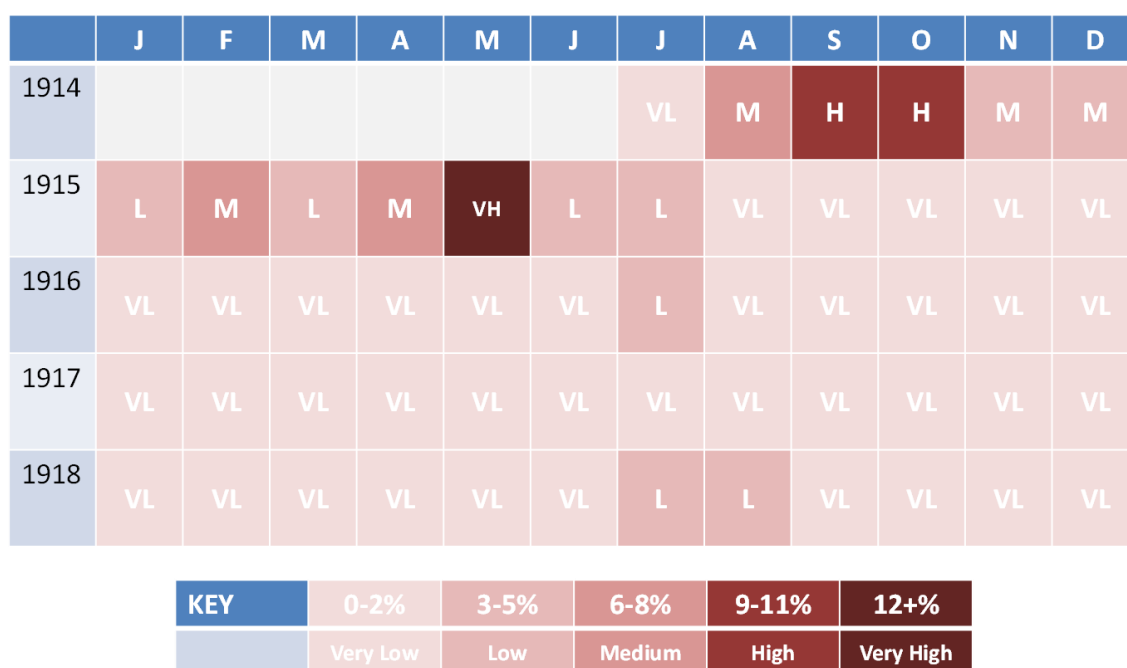
The Dachshund dog in the cartoon to its contemporary audience was a symbol of Germany. The symbolism was so strong that in the early stages of the war there are anecdotes of Dachshund owners finding their dogs stoned by passers-by whilst out walking. At the same time the ‘German shepherd’ breed of dog was renamed ‘Alsatian wolf dog’ by the British Kennel Club to avoid any controversy and links to Germany.

*Punch* magazine was a British humour and satirical weekly institution that was published between 1841 and 2002. Its political and social cartoons and articles capture life in detail on the Home Front during the Great War. For the magazine’s humour to be consumed and resonate with its readers, the comic articles and cartoons had to reflect and mirror the issues of the day. Accordingly, *Punch* can be used as a barometer of public opinion and of the issues of the day during the Great War. Taking the weekly issues from

<sup>1</sup> *Punch Magazine (London)*, “A quick change of front”, 19 August 1914.

1914 through to the Armistice in 1918 it is possible to document when the issue of alien enemies and internment became the hot topics of the day.

Figure 11. Punch enemy alien and internment content heat map 1914-1918.<sup>2</sup>



By counting the number of enemy alien and internment articles and cartoons against the total number in each issue, a heat map (above) can be created. The *Punch* enemy alien and internment heat map highlights the months with the most related content during the Great War. These heat spots include the opening few months of the war in the autumn of 1914 and the spring of 1915. There are also two lesser spikes worth considering, in summers of 1916 and 1918.

The same heat map methodology can be used to understand when the topic of enemy aliens and internment was reported and made the headlines in a national newspaper. The Daily Mirror had been founded in 1903 by Alfred Hamsworth and sold as a paper for women readers. During the Great War its circulation grew to over a million readers due in part to the high use of war photography on its front pages.<sup>3</sup>

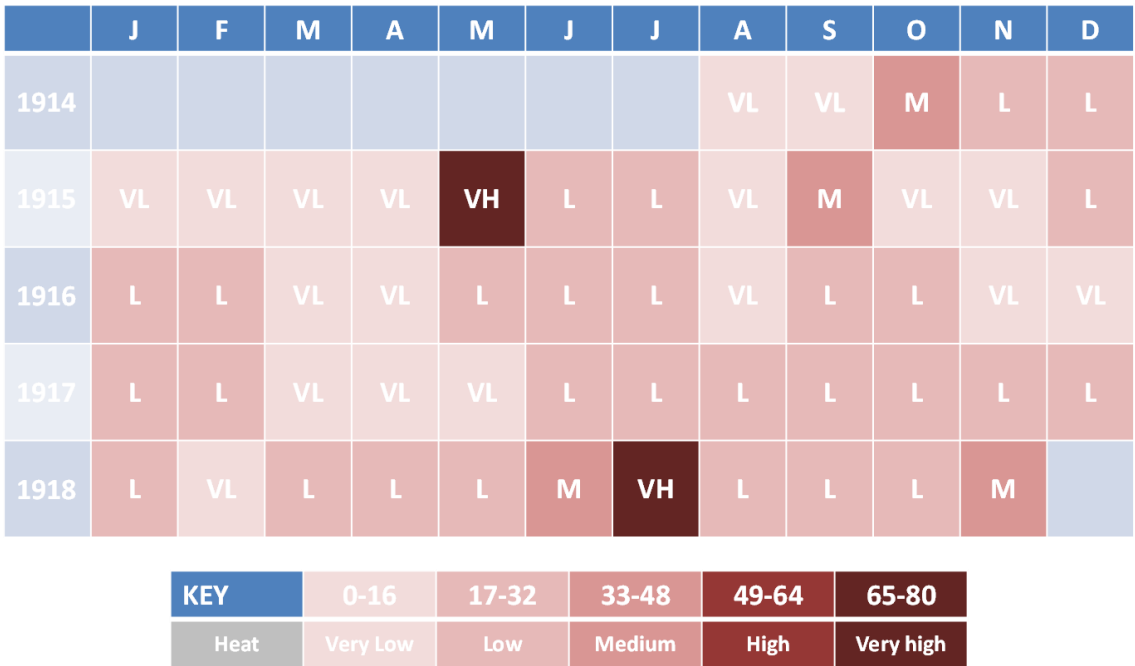
The October 1914 heat spike is contained within a two week time frame from 18 October to the end of the month. In the May 1915 heat spike, the number articles mentioning enemy aliens and internment starts rising from the sinking of the Lusitania on 7 May and peaks to a high on 15 May. By the end of the month the number of related

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix One for numbers of *Punch* enemy alien and internment articles and cartoons by weekly issue during the Great War.

<sup>3</sup> S Taylor, *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere and The Daily Mail* (London, 1996), p.227.

articles has plateaued down to one to two a week. In the 1918 July heat spike there is a constant stream of enemy alien and internment articles during the first three weeks of the month. This then tails off after the results of the Finsbury by-election around 16 July.

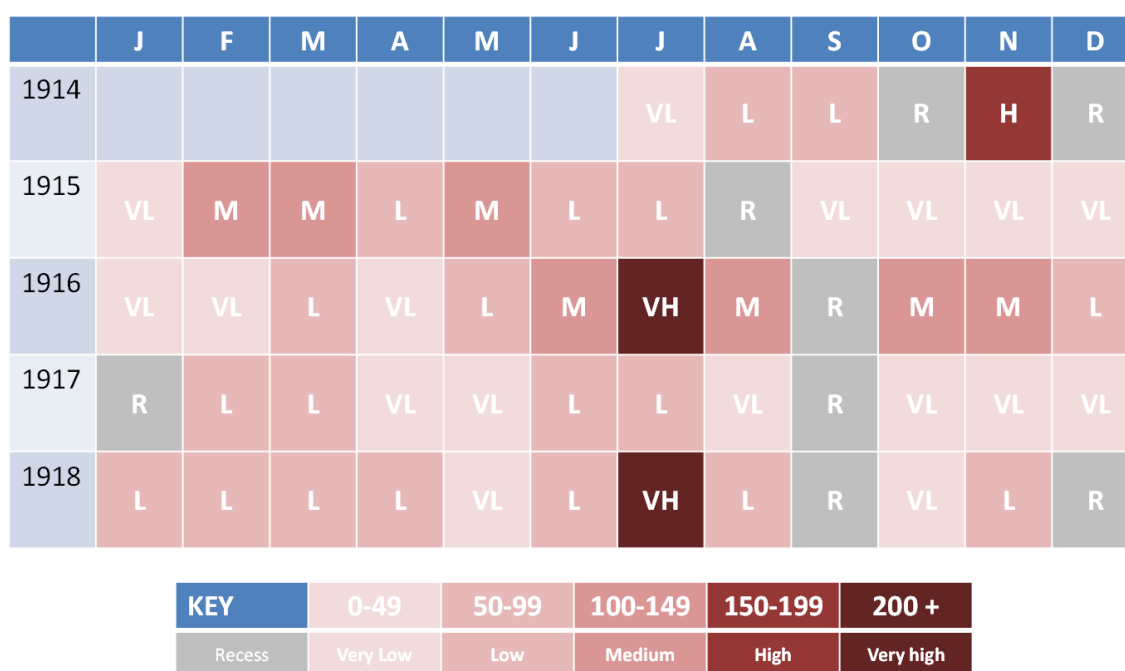
Figure 12. The Daily Mirror enemy alien and internment article heat map, 1914-1918.<sup>4</sup>



Finally, the same methodology can be used to understand when the topic of enemy alien and internment was debated in the Houses of Parliament. Using the records of Hansard Parliamentary Debates, the official report of proceedings of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, it is possible to map the frequency of debates that included enemy alien or internment during the Great War.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix Two for numbers of Daily Mirror articles on enemy alien and internment by day during the Great War.

Figure 13. Parliamentary enemy alien and internment debate content heat map, 1914-1918.<sup>5</sup>



The Parliamentary heat map has heat spots corresponding with the ones already highlighted in the *Punch* and *The Daily Mirror* maps; for the autumn of 1914, spring of 1915 and the summers of 1916 and 1918. It is therefore possible to conclude there is a correlation between the three, but with the Parliamentary debates slightly lagging behind *Punch* and *The Daily Mirror* having a longer tail.

*Punch* magazine content, *Daily Mirror* articles and the debates in Parliament focused on enemy alien and internment can be seen as reactive indicators to press and public pressure. This chapter will focus upon exploring these heat spots to determine just how much the press and public pressure influenced government policy and direction in relation to the enemy alien and internment question and link it back to the work of MI5. It charts the journey from *Punch*'s 'A Quick Change Of Front' in August 1914 to the Glasgow Post's cartoon in June 1918 'At Last, By George'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix Three for numbers of debates on enemy alien and internment in the House of Lords and House of Commons during the Great War.

<sup>6</sup> The Post (*Glasgow*), "Will he comb out the Hun?: Prime Minister and the scandal of the Alien Enemy", 23 June, 1918.



Figure 14. 'At Last, By George!'



In June, 1918, Prime Minister Lloyd George took steps to take personal control of the enemy alien question and promised to overhaul the Government's methods of internment and naturalisation. This continued into Lloyd George's 'Coupon election' campaign of December 1918 which Hugh Purcell described as, 'the euphoria of victory degenerated into the virulence of revenge.'<sup>7</sup> Lloyd George's campaign fanned the flames for the crowds and the press to call for enemy aliens to be got rid of and for full repatriation of all Germans still in Britain after the Armistice.

On the outbreak of war in August 1914, the British press favourably reported the implementation of the Aliens Restriction Act and legislation to control any German spies in Britain. The headline of the *Western Daily Press* proclaimed to its readers: "No Need For Any Panic" as it set out the Government's war time plans on Thursday 6 August.<sup>8</sup> It went on to report on the twenty-one spies arrested over the previous twenty-four hours,

<sup>7</sup> H Purcell, *Lloyd George* (London, 2006), p.74.

<sup>8</sup> *Western Daily Press (Bristol)*, "No need for any panic", 6 August 1914.

and that the Aliens Bill was: ‘causing as little inconvenience as possible to alien friends, while at the same time securing effective control over dangerous alien enemies.’<sup>9</sup> Most provincial newspapers reported on how local police authorities were implementing the Alien Restriction Act, the numbers of enemy aliens being registered and details on the items aliens could no longer keep in their possession. The *Manchester Courier* went so far as to describe the restriction act as: ‘instructions of a drastic character with regard to the registration of foreigners from Germany and Austria.’<sup>10</sup> Any enemy aliens flouting the restrictions found their arrests, court appearances and court fines reported in regional newspapers alongside any spy suspects that had been rounded up and arrested. Typical articles reported enemy alien violations of the Alien Restriction Act, including failure to register at a local police station, travelling further than five miles from the stated residence or being found in possession of banned items such as a camera or a car. However, even with the confident reporting of the Alien Restriction Act introduction, spy scares and rumours were still rife within the pages of Britain’s local newspapers. An example of a scare story comes from the town of Cupar, Fife, Scotland where the local paper reported rumours of male German spies walking through the town disguised as nuns.<sup>11</sup>

There are some examples in August of newspapers reporting alien activity in a positive light. On Wednesday 12 August the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*’s London correspondent told its readers of the story of enthusiastic aliens joining an army corps nicknamed the ‘King’s Foreign Legion’ to fight against Germany.

Though aliens are being registered in case they may prove to be enemies of this country, the resident foreigners as a rule are faithful citizens. They have made a splendid response to the call to form a corps to assist the country of their adoption against Germany... Men of all countries-Italians, French, Danes, and Russians-have joined. The roll now numbers 800, and it is hoped in a day or two to raise it to 1000.<sup>12</sup>

By the third week of August 1914, newspapers were reporting that the arrestment of foreign suspects, by the police, had been completed in London and most large towns. It would appear that the spy danger in Britain had been reduced and that the police and government were in control of the situation. This links back to the pre-war work of the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, “Restrictions on aliens”, 8 August 1914.

<sup>11</sup> The Courier (*Dundee*), “Spy scare in Cupar results in shooting of a horse through the neck”, 17 August 1914.

<sup>12</sup> Aberdeen Daily Journal, “London Letter, King’s Foreign Legion”, 12 August 1914.

Secret Service Bureau to compile suspect arrest lists to be enacted on the outbreak of war and the black lists system.

The London correspondent of the *Manchester Courier*, in a letter of Sunday 23 August, turned his attention to the enemy aliens at large within the British Isles. With the spy threat under control, the letter explained that Germans and Austrians still in the country posed little danger.

The great majority of the Germans and Austrians now living in this country are really innocent of hostile intent, and would prefer to live here in peace than go back home to be pressed into military service when circumstances demanded their impressment. Quite a number are men who have ignored the call to the colours, and are, therefore, liable to be shot as deserters should they return to their own country.<sup>13</sup>

The article then went on to discuss enemy alien policy options and question the loyalty of such groups in Britain.

It is always a moot question whether a belligerent has anything to gain by the expulsion of alien enemies under such circumstances, but at the moment the prevailing official view here is that no great danger will rise from allowing the Germans and Austrians residents to remain in this country under strict surveillance. It must be remembered that some, at least, of these strangers within our gates are strongly British in their sympathies, and the police are quite satisfied that in many cases, if these aliens had to choose between returning to their own country to fight and enlisting in our own army, they would choose the latter course.<sup>14</sup>

In the opening weeks of the war, the press were largely behind and in support of the measures enacted against the enemy alien population by the police and government. Amongst the many column inches of spy scares and rumours the press were able to reassure the public that Germans and Austrians still in Britain posed no great danger to the security of the country. Even with these reassurances, during August there were isolated incidents of hooliganism against German properties in the East End of London. However, this is unsurprising as London's east end had probably the largest enemy alien population in the country.

At the end of August came the first serious anti-German disturbance at a place called Keighley on 29 and 30 August 1914. The rioters in this West Yorkshire town focused their attention on German shopkeepers' properties over the two nights. They raided shop stocks, smashed windows and tried to set a property alight. The Keighley

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<sup>13</sup> Manchester Courier, "Our London letter, rounding up the spies", 24 August 1914.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

riots do not appear to be a reaction to the recently enacted enemy alien legislation or a 'call to intern them all'. Panayi attributes the start of the riot to a moulders' and engineers' strike that had been simmering in the town for several months. 'We can blame the effects on the first excitement of war, a provocative act by those who came under attack, and, in the case of Keighley, the local economic situation.'<sup>15</sup>

Starting in August and spreading into September 1914, pockets of the home front began to call for the boycotting of all things German. *Punch* had already alluded to it in its cartoon 'A Quick Change Of Front', but the mass boycott not only included German manufactured goods and toys, and German music, it also incorporated German aliens working in Britain. Georgia Lee's diary entry for Friday 14 August 1914 noted that Theodore Kroell, general manager at the London Ritz hotel, had been sacked:

The manager of the Ritz Hotel has been forced to resign under dramatic circumstances this morning, amid the lamentations of the visitors. They said they had never had such a pleasant manager to deal with: un si charmant homme, bon comme du pain, as an incredulous French lady explained to Mrs Dana.<sup>16</sup>

Kroell, described by *The New York Time* as: 'one of the most practical hotel men in Europe', had been general manager at the Ritz since 1909.<sup>17</sup> Sacked because of his Germanic origins, Kroell was later interned on the Isle of Man in November 1915.

The *Manchester Courier* noted on Tuesday 25 August 1914 that the London trend for hotels sacking any employees that were non-naturalised Germans or Austrians from their workforces had reached the city of Manchester.

Hotel proprietors have, however, been compelled to discharge the Germans and Austrians, regardless of internal inconvenience, as the British public on the whole refuse to patronise places which offer employment to the enemy.<sup>18</sup>

Members of the public had begun to demand to see the passports of hotel staff with unusual accents to check for any German or Austrian employees. As the public boycott hit, the hotel industry found it difficult to recruit skilled English waiters to replace enemy alien staff they had been forced into sacking. The Manager of the Grand Hotel in Manchester told the *Manchester Courier* reporter:

We do not want to keep non-naturalised Germans, and we're dismissing them all as soon as possible. The difficulty is finding people to replace them. The average

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<sup>15</sup> Panayi, *Racial Violence in Britain*, p.67.

<sup>16</sup> Roynon, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>17</sup> The New York Time, "London hotel man yields palm to US", 3 April 1910.

<sup>18</sup> Manchester Courier, "Alien enemy waiters; English waiters are wanted in Manchester hotels", 25 August 1914.

Englishman regards the work of the waiter as a last hope, and in consequence there are comparatively very few really good ones. I have already tried several, but they are of no use for the class of work required here.<sup>19</sup>

*Punch* magazine's light-hearted take on the alien waiter question noted: 'the pernicious practice which had grown up before the War of ordering German waiters with one's dinner must be abandoned before the hotel managers remove them permanently from their menus'.<sup>20</sup>

The shortage of skilled labour did not stop at German and Austrian waiters. A cartoon by W.K. Haselden in the *Daily Mirror* on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1914, studied the effects of having no German barbers in London under the headline '*Now That All The German Barbers Have Gone*'.<sup>21</sup> Haselden suggests that the gilded youth of the nation would end up with long hair and beards, and that the country would end up having to resort to the pudding bowl method of cutting hair. The only way to avoid such a disaster, according to the *Daily Mirror*'s cartoon, is to join the army and obtain a free haircut from the many English barbers that have joined up. As for those naturalised German barbers that remained in Britain and offering their skills, they would be later accused of benefiting at the expense of British barbers who had taken up military service.<sup>22</sup>

A letter to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* at the end of September called for the formation of a non-German league.<sup>23</sup> The reader suggested that the public could pledge themselves to boycott all German manufactured goods through a subscription league and put pressure on any traders and retailers still stocking German-made products. The boycott of all things German within the British Isles continued to increase in scale into October. Its impact on the German and Austrian population still in Britain was to largely make them destitute. With enemy alien males unemployable and their families largely shunned, they had few options for support. It drove some to apply to enter the internment camps as a better alternative to the prospect of the local workhouse.<sup>24</sup> Here the illusion of enemy aliens moved from a security threat to an economic one for the government.

At a conference between the Foreign Office, Home Office, War Office and the Commissioner of Police, on 24 August, 1914 the economic impact of unemployed enemy

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> *Punch Magazine* (London), "Charivari", 7 June 1916.

<sup>21</sup> The *Daily Mirror* (London), "Now that all the German barbers have gone", 29 September 1914.

<sup>22</sup> *Punch Magazine* (London), "Charivari", 22 March 1916.

<sup>23</sup> G Fuller, *The Telegraph Book of Readers' Letters From the Great War* (London, 2014), p.31.

<sup>24</sup> M Foley, *Prisoners of the British: Internees and Prisoners of War During the First World War* (Croydon, 2015), p.36.

aliens was discussed. The conference concluded: 'This destitution might eventually lead to acts of violence which in the interests of the country must be obviated by supplying them [enemy aliens] with food and keeping them under control.'<sup>25</sup> However, further research into the collection and supervision of destitute enemy aliens and whether to supply them with food or money to purchase some broke down. The sticking point: 'who should be responsible for carrying out these arrangements and for the expense entailed thereby.'<sup>26</sup>

Sylvia Pankhurst, a suffragette and opposed to the war, spent her time campaigning for the rights of women and the poor whilst their husbands were either away fighting or interned. It was during one of her tours of the East End of London that she noticed the plight of the Anglo-German families: 'It was a shock to learn that the children of British wives of Germans, whose husbands were interned, were refused school meals because of their fathers' nationality, though themselves legally British subjects, compelled to attend school, and liable to conscription when old enough.'<sup>27</sup>

This was compounded in October 1914 by the stream of Belgian refugees coming to Britain. It is estimated up to 260,000 Belgians fled to Britain in the first few months of the war as the German army advanced across much of Belgium. With the refugees came tales and stories of German atrocities carried out on the civilian population of Belgium. These stories raised the tension between the British Home Front and any enemy aliens still at large. Georgina Lee notes in her diary for Thursday 15 October 1914 that there were already 150,000 Belgians in Britain. She goes on to describe a meeting with three Belgian sisters from Antwerp who recounted their experiences of a Zeppelin bombing raid on Antwerp.<sup>28</sup> Antwerp had fallen to the German army on the 9 October having been under siege since the 28 September 1914.

The tension between the Home Front and enemy aliens was raised even further by the fear and rumour that there was a possibility of German spies hiding amongst the Belgian refugee population in Britain. On Tuesday 20 October Georgina Lee records in her diary,

The stream of Belgian refugees is still continuing. German spies are seizing the opportunity to get into the country. Forty spies were captured landing among the

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<sup>25</sup> TNA: KV 1/65, 1914-1915 Control of aliens including CID sub-committee; Conference on the disposal of male subjects of enemy states.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> E Pankhurst, *The Home Front* (London, 1987). p.86.

<sup>28</sup> Roynon, op. cit., p.49.

Belgians. So the Government have prohibited the housing of any refugees on the East Coast, whence they could transmit signals to the enemy.<sup>29</sup>

The British Government sought to calm any anxiety and spy scare fears that the Home Front might have been experiencing with a statement from the Press Bureau on the 9 October 1914. Reported in most local and national newspapers around the country, the statement drew attention to the work of a “special intelligence department”. It also drew attention to the numbers of enemy aliens being tracked and those already interned. The *Manchester Courier's* by-line on the 9 October declared, ‘9,000 Enemy Aliens Under Arrest’; the *Liverpool Echo's* announced, ‘Lavish Expenditure on Secret Service’; and the *Birmingham Daily Post* revealed ‘What The Government Have Done. Effect of Their Measures Since The War’.<sup>30</sup>

It is interesting that the Government, at this point, decided it was necessary to issue a statement from the Press Bureau on the numbers of enemy aliens under arrest and that it chose to draw attention to what was essentially a secret government organisation. The article refers to the Secret Service Bureau as a ‘Special Intelligence Department’ that had been established by the War Office and Admiralty and was working in close co-operation with the Home Office and the police. The work of the Special Intelligence Department is described in the years before the war as, ‘supported by all the means which could be placed at its disposal by the Home Secretary, was able in the three years, from 1911 to 1914, to discover the ramifications of the German Secret Service in England.’<sup>31</sup>

The article confirmed that, in the five years running up to the outbreak of war, Germany had been trying to establish an espionage system within the British Isles. However, it is then quick to point out the German spies had achieved little thanks to the knowledge and work of the Secret Service Bureau.

In spite of enormous efforts and lavish expenditure of money by the enemy, little valuable information passed into their hands. The agents, of whose identity knowledge was obtained by the Special Intelligence Department, were watched and shadowed, without in general taking any hostile action or allowing them to know that their movements were watched. When, however, any actual step was taken to convey plans or documents of importance from this country to Germany, the spy was arrested, and in such case evidence sufficient to secure his conviction was usually found in his possession.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>30</sup> Manchester Courier, “The German spy ring broken up”, 9 October 1914.

Liverpool Echo, “German spy system”, 9 October 1914.

Birmingham Daily Post, “German spy system crushed”, 9 October 1914.

<sup>31</sup> Manchester Courier, “The German spy ring broken up”, 9 October 1914.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

The statement then turns its attention to the declaration of war and the arrest of twenty known German spies. It explains why none of the spies arrested on behalf of the special intelligence department had yet been brought to trial. This timing of the official announcement and acknowledging the work of the Secret Service Bureau is explained by the fact that evidence to be produced in cases against arrested spies would be shortly made public in their trials. Any disclosure of these cases before this point would have exposed the work of the intelligence department and could have hampered other ongoing investigations. The Press Bureau then reassures readers that these spies, along with nearly two hundred other suspects that had been under observation before the war, were now all interned.

However, even with the successes, the Press Bureau highlighted the need for vigilance and that the measures carried out by the Home Office and War Office would need to continue:

Although the action taken on August 4th is believed to have broken up the spy organisation which had been established before the war, it is still necessary to take the most rigorous measures to prevent the establishment of any fresh organisation and to deal with individual spies who might previously have been working in this country outside of the organisation, or who might be sent here under the guise of neutrals after the declaration of war.<sup>33</sup>

These measures included cable and postal censorship, and the stringent powers given in the Alien Restrictions Act and Defence of the Realm Act that made espionage a military offence.

The Press Bureau in its statement finally reminded the general public of the etiquette when reporting any cases of suspected espionage. It was an action trying to stem rumour and alarm that individuals had caused by publishing their unsubstantiated stories in the press rather than going to the authorities.

In carrying out their duties military and police authorities would expect that persons having information of cases of suspected espionage would communicate the grounds of the suspicion to local military or local police, who are in direct communication with the Special Intelligence Department, instead of causing unnecessary public alarm, and possibly giving warning to the spier, by public speeches or letters to the Press.<sup>34</sup>

The conclusion of the Press Bureau statement reinforces the Government's policy towards German and Austrian enemy aliens:

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



From the beginning any Germans or Austrians who were deemed by the police to be likely to be dangerous were apprehended, handed over to the military authorities, and detained as prisoners of war, and as soon as the military authorities desired it general action was taken to arrest and hand over to military custody Germans of military age, subject to exceptions, which have properly been made on the grounds of policy.

About nine thousand Germans and Austrians of military age have been so arrested, and are still held as prisoners of war in detention camps, and among them are included those who are regarded by the police as likely, in any possible event, to take part in any outbreak of disorder or incendiarism.<sup>35</sup>

Another point of interest in the statement, is in its origins from the Press Bureau.<sup>36</sup> The Press Bureau had been established jointly by War Office and Admiralty in August 1914 under Frederick Smith, later Lord Birkenhead, as a mouth piece for the British Armed forces. One of the remits of the Press Bureau was to counteract rumours and falsehood through the distribution of official news relating to military and naval matters. It also advised newspapers on the kinds of information connected with war that could be published. This meant not publishing any military or naval facts and information that could be of advantage to the enemy. For any war correspondents within military zones this resulted in their articles being censored by the Press Bureau before they could be published. For the Home Front newspaper correspondents this resulted in them not being able to report military or naval movements, talk about fortifications, defences or ships around the British Isles. They also had to seek approval of the Admiralty or War Office to report on the impact of raids on the United Kingdom, such as Zeppelin raids and the German naval attacks on the East Coast in December 1914. The logic here was that detailed reporting of locations hit by, and the damage caused by, German Zeppelin raids would be of advantage to the enemy.

As the Secret Service Bureau was a Military Intelligence department within the War Office, it makes sense that any official communication on its work and recent success should come through the Press Bureau. It also makes sense to try and suppress espionage rumours in the press as it was difficult to know how much of the information could be of use to real German agents operating within Great Britain and their contacts back in Germany.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Establishment of the Press Bureau see: Wilkinson, p.74-86. Riddell, *Lord Riddell's War Diary* (London, 1933). p.9-26.

The statement had some impact as even William Mansfield, then privy councillor and Lord Chamberlain of the Household, noted it in his diary:

An interesting order from Home Office in “Times” (10<sup>th</sup>) showing how the authorities have investigated and kept touch with spies. That from their point of view nothing has been missed (in London), that the organization has been located and broken up, and that nowhere secrecy is any longer necessary or indeed possible. The threads are in the proper hands and being picked up.<sup>37</sup>

Mr William Le Queux, writing in February 1915, first quotes from the press release, and then calls it a ‘somewhat ludicrous communique’ and that, ‘such an attempt as this to lull us into a false sense of security was little short of criminal.’<sup>38</sup>

Even with the Press Bureau’s advice to the public, letters continued to appear in newspapers voicing readers’ concerns, spreading rumours and articulating ways to deal with enemy aliens. On Saturday 17 October 1914, the *Manchester Courier* published a letter under the byline, ‘The Enemy in Our Midst’.<sup>39</sup> The letter to the editor, from a Mr Price-Heywood of Norfolk Street, Manchester, tried to link enemy aliens with recent events:

I write to urge the necessity of a more rigorous treatment of the alien enemies amongst us. Every few days we read of an attack upon a sentry, and an attempt to destroy a railway bridge, or a similar outrage. Mr Churchill has stated that not a single alien has been convicted of an outrage. He did not say that no alien had attempted an outrage. It is unlikely that the man who tried to wreck an express on the Tay Bridge, or the one who shot two sentries at Plymouth this week, are English. Without being an alarmist, and fully recognising the difficulties attending a German invasion, it is probable that in the event of such an invasion, or even of a smaller raid, Germans would be found ready to help in every town and district in England. Antwerp fell through treachery; the same fate might, not inconceivably, befall our country.<sup>40</sup>

The security fear level within the British Isles had been raised by the German advance across Belgium. With the fall of Antwerp, German advances along the Channel coast towards Calais and the Belgian Government having retreated from Ostend to consolidate in Le Havre, table talk in Britain turned to possible invasion. Invasion talk was not just the subject of letters to newspapers it went right to the top. The Committee of Imperial Defence under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister Asquith, met on the morning of 7 October to discuss the possibilities of German invasion. Again on Tuesday 13 October,

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<sup>37</sup> Viscount Sandhurst, *1914-1915*, p.63.

<sup>38</sup> W Le Queux, *German Spies in England: An Exposure* (Toronto, 1915). p.100.

<sup>39</sup> *Manchester Courier*, ‘The Enemy in our Midst’, 17 October 1914.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

‘Kitchener, Winston Churchill, Lloyd George and other ministers’ met to discuss new developments taking place in Belgium.<sup>41</sup>

Mr Price-Heywood then gave advice to the Government on enemy alien policy going forward:

I propose (1) that no more alien enemies be naturalised during the war; (2) that all alien enemies (male and female) in Great Britain be interned in military camps during the war. The Government should provide for their families and see that they are properly cared for, charging the costs in the war indemnity. Such a proposal may seem harsh, but it is the only safe way. The present system of registration is quite inadequate. There is ample time for mischief between the prescribed times of notification. Only suspicious cases are shadowed by the police. Successful spies are more likely to be found amongst those who arouse no suspicion.<sup>42</sup>

Later on the same day that this letter was published in Manchester, Saturday 17 October, the capital witnessed its first anti-German riots. These riots broke out during the evening in and around Deptford. Rioting continued over the weekend and into Monday, with most of the disturbances happening in the late evening around shops and businesses belonging to enemy aliens. The disturbances also spread out from Deptford across South London with smaller violent events taking place in, Brixton, Catford, Lee Green, Camberwell and on the Old Kent Road. In each case, the shops and a public house belonging to Germans were targeted. It was reported that the disturbance in Deptford attracted a crowd of 5,000 and that the police on the scene had to call for military backup to help regain control of the situation. At around midnight, 350 men of the Army Service Corps, armed with rifles, were used to surround the attacked properties to keep the crowds back.

On Monday 19 October, newspapers reported the detail of the riots in Deptford. The *Birmingham Daily Mail*'s byline highlighted, ‘Angry Mob Wrecks a Dozen Shops; Amazing Scenes in South London’, the *Derby Daily Telegraph* labelled the events, ‘A Reign of Terror’, and the *Daily Mirror* noted the un-lady like scene, ‘Stone-Throwing Women’.<sup>43</sup> In Hull, the *Daily Mail* asked, ‘Who can wonder at this while British trade is being stopped in Germany and every Britisher imprisoned, whilst the country is being

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<sup>41</sup> Roynon, op. cit., p.48.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Birmingham Daily Mail, “Anti-German Riots”, 19 October 1914.

Derby Daily Telegraph, “The Anti-German Riots in London”, 19 October 1914.

The Daily Mirror (London), “Anti-German Mob Wreck Shops”, 19 October 1914.

flooded with the victims of German atrocities in Belgium? If Mr McKenna will not intern "all enemies" for our own protection he will have to intern for their own.'<sup>44</sup>

Both Panayi and White attribute the cause of the riot to the arrival of 800 Belgian refugees in the east end of London who were to be housed in Deptford on the afternoon of 17 October.<sup>45</sup> Other coincidental attributing factors, would have been that 17 October was a Saturday, so rioters did not have to be up early the next day for work, and that Defence of the Realm Act orders restricting night lighting (essentially a black out for London) made it easier for participants to hide in the shadows.<sup>46</sup> A final attributing factor could have been the announcement of the sinking of the British Cruiser, HMS *Hawke*, in newspapers on 17 October. HMS *Hawke* had been sunk by a German submarine torpedo in the North Sea on 15 October and as, the *Daily Mirror* reminded its readers, 'we have lost our seventh cruiser since the beginning of the war.'<sup>47</sup> The press noted that over 350 officers and men were still reported as missing. Conclusions reached by the *Daily Mirror* after the sinking of HMS *Hawke* reflected a stronger tone and sentiment than that found in the Press Bureau statement from 9 October to members of the general public who spread rumour and fear.

During the last week there has been renewed activity on the part of the All is Lost League. Hence the crop of alarmist stories of Zeppelin raids, of how easy it is to invade these shores, and of the utter impossibility of any Briton ever doing anything. These alarmists are a greater source of danger than spies, and every member of the All is Lost League deserves to get the Iron Cross.<sup>48</sup>

However, the *Daily Mirror's* prose did nothing to stop the alarmists in and around Deptford on that Saturday night in October 1914.

Coinciding with the Deptford riots and the letter by Mr Price-Heywood in the *Manchester Courier* on 17 October was a meeting of the Sub-Committee dealing with the treatment of aliens in war time. It was at this meeting that the Sub-Committee recommended the wholesale internment of German and Austrian males of military age and the deportation of any others. The riots, the published letter and governmental gathering happening on the same day are a mere coincidence. For a start the Sub-Committee meeting would have taken place during the day, whereas the riots started in the evening, around 10 o'clock. Then the preparation to stage the Sub-Committee and

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<sup>44</sup> Daily Mail (Hull), "German 'Establishments', 19 October 1914.

<sup>45</sup> Panayi, *Racial Violence in Britain*, p.68. White, op. cit., p.73.

<sup>46</sup> An official warning on the lighting of London at night was issued by the Commissioners of Police of the Metropolis on 9 October 1914. Roynon, op. cit., p.46.

<sup>47</sup> Daily Mirror (London), "Germans occupy Ostend to chorus of hoots and groans", 17 October 1914.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

civil servants preparing papers and recommendation for the meeting would have been in place days before. As already highlighted in chapter four, the Cabinet approved the Sub-Committee's recommendations three days later, on 20 October, and the orders to arrest all male enemy aliens of military age were issued to police forces around the country.

Jerry White concludes:

That spark igniting Deptford and other parts of South London in October 1914 led within days to a fresh wave of internments of enemy aliens, more a public order measure than to protect national security; 'The action of the Home Office should tend to allay public anxiety', as one local newspaper put it.<sup>49</sup>

However, this assumption fails to see that the Government had already been discussing the recommencement of the wholesale internment of enemy aliens since the fall of Antwerp. With the possibility of German raids from across the Channel to the British Isles as its army headed towards Calais, the internment policy activity was directly linked to protecting national security.

A cartoon published in the *Daily Mirror* on Tuesday 20 October 1914 warned its readers to be on the lookout for British subjects with obvious German characteristics. These stereotypes include waiters, musicians, barbers and tailors that should not be trusted by the public.

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<sup>49</sup> White, op. cit., p.76.

Figure 15. 'People Not To Be Too Freely Believed.'<sup>50</sup>



By 21 October most of the 'people not to be too freely believed' were being rounded up by the police. In Coventry, *The Midland Daily Telegraph* reported that the police had arrested all the enemy aliens of military age in the city and that they were to be interned at the Newbury Camp. It noted that: 'the same drastic measures are, it is reported, being taken throughout the country to-day.'<sup>51</sup> A day later, the *Manchester Courier* announced that the Government had listened to newspaper pressure and were at last taking account of public opinion.

<sup>50</sup> The Daily Mirror (London), "People not to be too freely believed", 20<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

<sup>51</sup> The Midland Daily Telegraph, "Arrest of aliens", 21 October 1914.

The Government have at last grasped the nettle. They have decided to round up all Germans of military age now at large in this country, and to place them under proper control, and this process has already begun. This is a step which public opinion, and the "Manchester Courier," with other newspapers, have been steadily demanding for weeks past. The alien enemy in our midst will now, it is to be hoped, cease to be a constant anxiety to the authorities, and a menace to the safety of the Empire and to the success of British arms.<sup>52</sup>

It is interesting to note that some newspapers at this point in time drew a distinct line between enemy aliens and naturalised Germans or Austrians.

Naturalised Germans will remain unaffected. They are British citizens covered by the broader mantle of British law. They cannot be touched by administrative order. Nor is it the British way to violate contracts and treat them as meaningless scraps of paper.<sup>53</sup>

It was not the British way to violate contracts when it came to naturalised German or Austrian citizens. However, the golden thread of criminal law, 'the presumption of innocence until proven guilty' for the rest of the Germanic community was happily waived at the first opportunity by the newspapers. The topic appeared to be a hot one in October and November 1914, so much so that it had Arthur Conan Doyle defending his views on naturalised Germans in the *Daily Mail*. In a letter published on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1914 Conan Doyle responded to earlier remarks in the paper and clarified his position on German aliens:

I have said nothing about German aliens. In fact, I reluctantly acquiesce in their internment, for though I believe them to be in the main inoffensive people, it is just that they should suffer for the methods of their country as exemplified by Stiefer, Graves, and others.

The case I mentioned were of those of Germans long naturalised with British wives. If these are to be treated exactly as the aliens are, then a British naturalisation paper has become as faithless a document as a German treaty.

A London newspaper quoted the other day with apparent approval the case of a citizen whose windows were broken because he harboured two distressed Germans. The same paper referred to the people who had subscribed to a fund for helping destitute German governesses, music masters, and others as "comforting the King's enemies." This is not patriotism. It is pure caddishness, and hurtful to our national reputation.<sup>54</sup>

Conan Doyle's voice was not a lone voice. Within the correspondence sections of local newspapers around the country more letters appeared at the injustice of the mass

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<sup>52</sup> Manchester Courier, "Wholesale arrest of alien enemies", 22 October 1914.

<sup>53</sup> The Derby Daily Telegraph, "Alien enemies in England", 22 October 1914.

<sup>54</sup> R Hamilton, *Letters and news from the trenches and the home front* (Croxley Green, 2014), p.16.

internment of innocent German and Austrian enemy aliens. On 30 October 1914, the *Birmingham Daily Post* published a letter from a Mr Harbourne,

The sentiment expressed by Mr Sturge in his letter today must surely voice the opinion of very many people who believe that "justice" and "Fair play" are English tributes. There can be only one way to my mind to treat traitors to their country, and that is by shooting them. If instead of interning hundreds of good and loyal citizens, and causing untold misery to wives and children, whose only crime is to bear an alien name, examples were made of those who are found to be treacherous enemies, there would be little need for the present drastic and un-english proceedings. There must surely be other means of detecting our enemy than by what is practically a wholesale sacrifice of women and little children, who will be thrown on the mercy of the world.<sup>55</sup>

Mr George Bainton from Coventry was motivated enough to write to the editor of his local newspaper, the *Midland Daily Telegraph*. Bainton wrote on behalf of his son, at that point a British alien internee in Germany, who had asked his father to publicize the plight of British citizens detained in Germany. Up until this point British citizens in Germany had been dealt with 'every consideration and courtesy' by the police, but were being 'now threatened with severity of treatment, as the Germanic response to unworthy persecution of their people here.'<sup>56</sup>

Our present method of stopping the plague of espionage can result in little good. It leaves crowds of men and women at large, and free to do their worst if that be their design, and thrusts into these hateful compounds innocent people, the bulk of whom have never had a thought of wrong to the country of their adoption.

Justice demands that only those who have given rise to suspicion by suspicious actions should be interned and kept from further harm. In British law persons hitherto have been accounted innocent until they have been proved guilty; and this wholesale plunging of men into confinement, apart from all questions of innocence, is a wrong terribly provocative of reprisals.<sup>57</sup>

The British wife of a German jute clerk wrote to the editor of the *Dundee Courier* to defend her husband against claims and rumour published about him in the newspaper.

Referring to your article in today's "Courier," entitled "alien danger in Dundee," I beg to point out to grave misstatements of facts that you made when referring to Mr Hermann Boettcher as an alien enemy - "trained in arms," and holding a position as an "officer in the German Landsturm."

Both these statements are actually false. Mr Boettcher is a man who has never handled a firearm in his life, has never at any time served in the German or any

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<sup>55</sup> Birmingham Daily Post, "Correspondence", 30 October 1914.

<sup>56</sup> The Midland Daily Telegraph (Coventry), "Correspondence; The internment of aliens", 9 November 1914.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.



other army, and had he gone to Germany to join the ranks he would have been no better than the rawest recruit in the British Army today.<sup>58</sup>

Mr Boettcher had been arrested on Wednesday 21 October 1914 and this had been reported by the paper. *The Courier* reported, 'Action taken yesterday by the authorities in Dundee indicates that they are not out of sympathy with the steadily growing opinion in the public mind that everything possible should be done to guard against the alien danger in our midst.'<sup>59</sup> As well as the allegations his wife refuted the paper questioned why a 'highly intelligent' German of 'keen business perception' had been allowed to remain within a fortified area even though he been granted an exemption from internment by a Home Office Order. Mrs Boettcher's letter to *The Courier* then goes on to talk about the difficulties internment brings to her and her husband.

As regards Mr Boettcher's removal to Redford Camp, neither he nor I, his wife, have any complaints to make. It is certainly hard to be separated, but we have been ready, ever since war broke out, to accept the facts and to bear as bravely as we can all the conditions and restrictions which the law might lay upon us, knowing well that such precautions are necessary and right in these critical times, but, my husband being away and unable to defend himself, I cannot read with calmness such statements regarding him without repudiating them, when I know them to be utterly untrue.

I hope the British love of fair play will appeal to you in this matter, and that, as you have made a public announcement of the supposed facts, you will now see your way to make a public denial of the same.<sup>60</sup>

The letter had been published under a headline 'Keeping an eye on the Germans' and was preceded by further reports of the wholesale arrest of aliens in the local area and throughout the country. However, rather than issue a denial, *The Courier* concluded the column with a plea, 'Readers are invited to report to us any suspicious circumstances which occur in their district, and which in their opinion ought to be investigated by the authorities.'<sup>61</sup>

By 24 October 1914, the *Manchester Courier* reported to readership, 'Halt In The Alien Enemy Round-Up.'<sup>62</sup> The article went on to link the halt in arrests to a limit in accommodation in which to house all male enemy aliens. Talking to a Whitehall official on the subject of the wholesale roundup, the source told the *Courier*: 'As a matter of fact, the order has been in force for many weeks, and not a day has passed without arrests being

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<sup>58</sup> The Courier (Dundee), "The arrest of a German jute clerk", 23 October 1914.

<sup>59</sup> The Courier (Dundee), "Alien danger in Dundee", 22 October 1914.

<sup>60</sup> The Courier (Dundee), "The arrest of a German jute clerk", 23 October 1914.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Manchester Courier, "Halt in alien enemy round-up", 24 October 1914.

made of registered Germans and Austrians liable for military duty. On some days the number has been small; but others such as this week it has been large.’<sup>63</sup>

Asked why this week had witnessed such an outburst of police activity, he explained that it is because the authorities were now in a better position to enforce the order actively. Had arrests been carried out on a large scale hitherto there would have been no place in which to accommodate all the prisoners. The War Office had now provided more detention camps. "Even now," he added, "We have been asked to go slowly in London because there will be pressure on the accommodation from all parts of the country. At the present moment lack of accommodation is still a hindrance. Many of these whom we have been obliged to arrest have married English women and their entire interests are bound up in this country. They have been here for years, and they are not likely to try to injure us; but for the safety of the nation it is impossible to discriminate."

It is computed that there are 39,000 alien enemies of both sexes in the metropolitan area. As the majority have practically nothing beyond their weekly earnings - even professional men are scarcely better off - a lot of distress among the families whose breadwinners have been removed must be expected. In each case the police are making inquiries as to the family's means of sustenance, and it will be reported to the proper organisations for extending relief.<sup>64</sup>

The issue of enemy aliens and internment remained top-of-mind at the end of October and into November even with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. After discussions with the War Office on the formation of a Welsh-speaking army Division, Lloyd George let off steam in a letter, dated 28 October 1914, to Winston Churchill on the narrow mindedness of Lord Kitchener.

I am in despair over the stupidity of the War Office. You might imagine we were alien enemies who ought to be interned at Frimley until we had mastered the intricacies of the English language sufficiently to be able to converse on equal terms with an East End recruit.<sup>65</sup>

On the same day Churchill received this correspondence from Lloyd George there was a, not unexpected, letter from Prince Louis of Battenberg. Prince Louis, a German Prince with family connections to the British royal family (he married a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria), had become a naturalised British subject in 1868 having lived in Britain since the age of fourteen. With a distinguished career in the British Navy, Battenberg was appointed First Sea Lord in 1912. The letter from Prince Louis read:

I have lately been driven to the painful conclusion that at this juncture my birth and parentage have the effect of impairing in some respects my usefulness on the board of Admiralty. In the circumstances I feel it is to be my duty, as a loyal subject of His Majesty, to resign the office of First Sea Lord, hoping thereby to

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> R Lloyd George, *David & Winston: How a Friendship Changed History* (London, 2005), p.118.

facilitate the task of Administration of the great service, to which I have devoted my life, and to ease the burden laid upon HM Ministers.<sup>66</sup>

Correspondence between Battenberg and Churchill continued throughout Wednesday before Winston formally acknowledged Prince Louis' resignation on the Thursday. Both Battenberg's resignation letter and Churchill's official response were published in the press on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 1914. Churchill's responded:

This is no ordinary war, but a struggle between nations for life or death. It raises passions between races of the most terrible kind. It effaces the old landmarks and frontiers of our civilization. I cannot further oppose the wish, you have during the last few weeks expressed to me, to be released from the burden of responsibility which you have borne thus far with so much honour and success.

I must express publicly my deep indebtedness to you, and the pain I feel at the severance of our three years' official association. In all the circumstances you are right in your decision. The spirit in which you have acted is the same in which Prince Maurice of Battenberg has given his life to our cause and in which your gallant son is now serving in the Fleet.<sup>67</sup>

Prince Louis of Battenberg, as a result of the public's enemy alien outcry, was one of the first high profile resignations. Asquith, in his letters to Venetia Stanley, first writes on 24 October that the King was agitated about Prince Louis' position at the Admiralty. Asquith inferred that the King and Queen had been receiving letters from the public abusing them for keeping their German cousin at the Admiralty.<sup>68</sup> By 28 October, in another letter to Venetia, Asquith's opinion was that Battenberg must go. However at the news of Battenberg's resignation not all newspapers celebrated his removal. The *Birmingham Daily Mail* reflected:

It is not battering to our national pride to have to confess that Prince Louis of Battenberg has been made a victim of the degraded storm of so-called patriotism which has brought pain and serious hardship to so many innocent persons since the war began. The "patriotism" which takes the form of denunciation of all aliens or supposed aliens, and the spreading of totally unfounded rumours, associating persons who have hitherto acted as law-abiding and respectable citizens with all manners of treason-able acts, is a menace rather than a service to the country. It is resulting in the adoption in certain quarters of measures against aliens which are calculated to lead to reprisals against our own countrymen in Germany, the alienation of close sympathies on the part of many who have made England their

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<sup>66</sup> M Gilbert (ed), *Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume III Part 1 August 1914 – April 1915* (London, 1972), p.226.

<sup>67</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, "Prince Louis of Battenberg. Resignation from the Admiralty", 30 October 1914. [Prince Maurice of Battenberg served as a Lieutenant in the King's Royal Rifle Corps and had been killed in action during the first battle of Ypres on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1914, aged 23.]

<sup>68</sup> M Brock (ed), *H.H. Asquith Letters to Venetia Stanley* (Oxford, 1982), p.285.

home and adopted the habits and sentiments of British subjects, are the loss of services which have been invaluable.<sup>69</sup>

It would appear on the one hand it was fine for newspapers to publish stories of rumour and scaremongering against innocent enemy aliens at large within Britain; however to then take the moral high ground and chastise the public, who they had whipped up, when public opinion followed the newspapers example and demanded the wholesale internment of enemy aliens. Prince Louis' resignation was down to his Hessian birth and the ridiculous rumours that newspapers were willing to print. This was not based on any official intelligence at all, that Prince Louis was an actual security threat.

At the State opening of Parliament on Wednesday 11 November 1914, after the King's speech, Asquith was asked to clarify the Government's position on enemy aliens. Bonar Law stood up in the House of Commons:

We wish to know that they are not being influenced—doing comparatively little one day and more the next—by clamouring newspapers. We want to feel sure that they have really carefully thought out this subject, and that they should tell the House the principle upon which they are acting, and, more than that, having decided upon the principle, that they are satisfied that it is being effectively carried out.<sup>70</sup>

In response, Asquith explained firstly the reaction to the treatment of enemy aliens in the wider context of policy since the outbreak of war.

As soon as possible after the outbreak of war, the Government seized and placed beyond the reach of mischief all those persons who were suspected of being emissaries and spies of the enemies of the country. That operation was successfully accomplished before the war was a fortnight old. Of course, the ramifications of espionage are infinite, and it was a great mistake to suppose that if we put under lock and key every German in this country that would necessarily have got rid of the danger. At the best, it would be but a partial measure.<sup>71</sup>

Asquith then went onto explain that the recent wholesale arrests of male enemy aliens of military age was not a process to permanently imprison them for the duration of the war. It was a sifting exercise, in which aliens that did not pose a direct threat to national security, and could be vouched for, would be given exemption from internment. Any enemy aliens with exemption from internment would still be subject the Alien Restriction Act.

The second principle on which they proceeded was that, as a precautionary measure, it was desirable to intern alien residents on our shores for the purpose of

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<sup>69</sup> Birmingham Daily Mail, "Prince Louis of Battenberg", 30 October 1914.

<sup>70</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 68, (1914), col 19. [11 November].

<sup>71</sup> Newcastle Daily Journal "Reply from the Prime Minister - Alien enemies", 12 November 1914.

passing them through a process of sifting and winnowing, in order that they might determine which of them might be safely let loose. That was the process which was now being carried out. It was a very difficult and delicate one, in which mistakes must necessarily from time to time be made. It had certainly not been carried out, so far as the Government was concerned, with any harshness or cruelty. The great consideration, he quite agreed, was the safety of the country, (cheers) that was the first dominant and governing consideration, and by which they would continue to be actuated.<sup>72</sup>

This is an interesting line for Asquith as just two days before his speech in Parliament in a Cabinet meeting he presided over a squabble on the issue of enemy alien internment. Squaring up at the Cabinet meeting on 9 November 1914, were Horatio Kitchener for the War Office and Reginald McKenna for the Home Office. Charles Hobhouse noted that Kitchener at the meeting blamed McKenna for the non-arrest of all male enemy aliens, but at the same time he had not wanted aliens taking up valuable prison space that War Office resources would have to guard. 'The fact is the McK. went on arresting aliens till the Adjutant-General asked him to stop saying he had no place to concentrate them in, or any means of guarding them.'<sup>73</sup>

For the whole-sale internment and exemption process which the Secret Service Bureau had recommended to work the rate of aliens had to remain steady. This was so each enemy alien arrested could be investigated, and processed, and those with personal guarantors given exemption from internment and released. Those then being released freed up places in the limited number of internment camps around the country. The sheer numbers being arrested after the governmental decision in October 1914 to arrest all male enemy aliens at large simply overloaded the system and left War Office resources unable to cope. However to the outside world it looked like the Home Office were at fault and hence the difference of opinion in Cabinet.

Asquith's speech to Parliament is also of interest as he referred to recent action against enemy aliens as a precautionary measure sustaining the idea of: 'the precautionary principle'. In the longer term this line of policy development that the Secret Service Bureau advocated reinforced the public's vivid imagination that the enemy aliens were a real threat, rather than being the precautionary measure it was. It can then become a vicious circle and the persons or newspapers with the most vivid imagination become the most powerful. Political debate can become distorted and emotional as decisions are made

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<sup>72</sup> Newcastle Daily Journal "Reply from the Prime Minister - Alien enemies", 12 November 1914.

<sup>73</sup> David, *op. cit.*, p.206.

on a 'what if' basis without real evidence. This seems to be what gripped Britain during the first heat spike surrounding the issue of enemy aliens.

Even when civilians turned to the cinema or theatre for pure escapism the issue of enemy aliens could be found weaved into film and stage production plots. On a visit to 'The Tower Picture Palace', Hull, or 'The Palace', Sunderland in October 1914 or the 'Goldsmith Street Picture Palace', Nottingham in November 1914 a patron could watch a film called, 'Chained to the Enemy'.<sup>74</sup> The film, directed by F. Martin Thornton, is the story of an Anglo-German marriage and the war. Blanche Forsythe stars as Evelyn Von Alton, the British wife of a German Officer who is brutality treated by her husband and who tries to get back to England upon the declaration of war. The climax of the film finds Evelyn, then a nurse at a hospital base on the battlefield around Mons, forced to tend the wounds of both her German husband and her war correspondent lover who fights for his life. The advertisement for the film in The Hull Daily Mail trails it as 'acknowledged to be one of the finest films ever produced' and Nottingham Evening Post recommends it for vividly screened 'battle scenes and movements of troops.'<sup>75</sup> For the home front audience it was a reminder that British subjects were trapped in Germany as enemy aliens and that they were at the mercy of their captors.

Opening on the 10 December 1914 at the Royalty Theatre, London, '*The man who stayed at home*', used German stereotypes to inform its audience of the danger of enemy aliens at large within Britain. The play in three acts by Lechmere Worrall and Harold Terry, ran up 584 performances before it transferred to the Apollo Theatre, London, on 20 March 1916. In July 1915 the play was made into a short film by the Hepworth production company. The action takes place in the 'Wave Crest' boarding house on the East Coast during one particular day in September 1914. Christopher Brent is an undercover detective investigating the activities of enemy aliens staying at the boarding house. These enemy aliens include: Fraulein Schroeder, a non-naturalised sketching German governess, who had lived in Britain over twenty years; Fritz, an unemployed waiter, of Teutonic appearance who speaks with a distinct German accent, keeps homing pigeons and claims to be a naturalised Dutch citizen; and Carl Sanderson, a servant of the Admiralty, and his mother Mrs Sanderson, both Germans who are able to hide their foreign origins and sympathies to their mother country.

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<sup>74</sup> *Chained to the Enemy*. Barker Company, 1914. Film strip in two parts.

<sup>75</sup> The Daily Mail (Hull), "The Tower Picture Palace", 22 October 1914.

The Nottingham Evening Post, "Goldsmith Street Picture Palace", 4 November 1914.

Whilst Brent foils this Teutonic group's plans to communicate with a German submarine off the East Coast, by shooting down their homing pigeon carrying maps of English harbour defences and disabling a Marconi wireless hidden up the chimney, the rest of the naïve English characters focus their attentions on Christopher Brent's credentials. Brent is written off as a coward and a shirker in act one and presented with a white feather by Daphne Kidlington for not enlisting. Daphne tells Christopher, 'I've only done what I feel to be my duty.'<sup>76</sup> However, while the likes of Daphne and John Preston, the local Justice of the Peace, concentrate their attention questioning Brent's loyalty, they fail to see the suspicious activity being carried out by enemy aliens right under their noses. In the play's finale Brent exposes Schroeder, Fritz and the Sandersons as paid spies of the German Government as Carl tries to set fire to the hotel with a bomb. The spies are arrested and an awaiting German submarine in the harbour sunk thanks to Brent's actions. The J.P.'s daughter Molly concludes: 'And that's the man we all sneered at because he stayed at home'.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> J Harold Terry & L Worrall, *The man who stayed at home*, (London, 1915), p.27.

<sup>77</sup> Harold Terry, p.147.

The second intense period of enemy alien activity within Britain took place in the spring of 1915. However, between December 1914 and March 1915 questions were frequently raised in Parliament as to the numbers and locations of enemy aliens still at large within the British Isles, so the issue was never fully out of public consciousness. During a January 1915 debate in the House of Lords on enemy aliens in prohibited areas it was disclosed that 15,000 male Germans, Austrians and Hungarians had been interned out of a total population of 27,000.<sup>78</sup>

In February 1915, a small delegation of members of Parliament was formed to visit and observe the internment camps.<sup>79</sup> The group included Sir Henry Dalziel (M.P. for Kirkcaldy), Donald Macmaster (M.P. for Chertsey), George Roberts (M.P. for Norwich), Gerhom Stewart (M.P. for the Wirral), William Wilson (M.P. for Westhoughton) and Edward Strauss (M.P. for West Southwark). They were given permission for their visits by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War. Apart from Edward Strauss, who although born in London had German-Jewish roots and his constituency would have contained a high population of enemy aliens, the rest of the group did not represent areas with concentrations of enemy aliens. On a visit to the Donington Hall camp, Derbyshire, in March 1915 by the group of M.P.s, Gerhom Stewart reports that the German officers are: 'to be living under luxurious conditions'.<sup>80</sup>

The topic of enemy aliens continued to fill newspaper columns. The *Birmingham Post* called into question the Government's administering of the alien registration act and lack of a co-ordinated treatment of suspect enemy aliens at large:

Beyond doubt, a bad impression has been made by the apparent hesitancy, vacillation, and weak uncertainty of recent policy in regard to alien enemies. The conflicting Orders which have been issued from time to time, like the varying degrees of energy exhibited in carrying them into effect, may perhaps be explained; but a great deal more explanation will be required than has yet been vouchsafed. For Mr McKenna's strongest play hardly amounts to more than a statement that the various departments concerned are more or less at odds with one another; and if that be the case it is an extremely unsatisfactory state of things. As far as it can be seen, our protection against the malevolent activities of alien enemies, naturalised or unnaturalised, on the east coast and elsewhere, are sadly imperfect. The naval and military authorities lack the machinery for dealing with them; the local police lack both the knowledge and the incentive to vigorous action which the Government might be expected to give them at a time like this;

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<sup>78</sup> Manchester Courier, "3000 enemy aliens in prohibited areas", 7 January 1915.

<sup>79</sup> Liverpool Daily Post, "Internment Camps", 11 February 1915.

<sup>80</sup> The Observer (Cheshire), "Mr Stewart MP and aliens", 13 March 1915.



and McKenna, by his own account of the matter, lacks the power to stimulate them.<sup>81</sup>

The *Manchester Courier* asked: ‘why the Government are so lenient in regards to these people passes human comprehension, and though several members have expressed themselves pretty freely on the subject, no alteration in the administration of the act has yet been promised. That Germans are permitted to walk about freely in our midst is a painful fact.’<sup>82</sup>

Mr William Le Queux also took up the issue in his publication, ‘*German spies in England*’ published in February 1915.<sup>83</sup> In his introduction Le Queux acknowledges the existence of the Secret Service Bureau, labelling it, ‘the Confidential Department established in Whitehall’ and assures his readers that his energy devoted to tracking spies is documented in many reports he has sent to the Intelligence Department.<sup>84</sup> However, his praise stops at the British Secret Service Department, and he then turns his attention to McKenna and the Home Office for hiding the true state of German espionage and their preparation to raid Britain’s shores from the British public. He believes the public have been lulled into a false sense of security and that blame lies with McKenna.

The spies of Germany are to be found everywhere, yet the Home Office and the police have shown themselves quite incapable of dealing effectively with them. The War Office, under the excellent administration of Lord Kitchener, has surely been busy enough with military matters, and has had no time to deal with the enemy in our midst. Neither has the Admiralty. Therefore the blame must rest upon the Home Office who, instead of dealing with the question with a firm and drastic hand, actually issued a communique declaring that the spy peril no longer existed!<sup>85</sup>

Le Queux concludes by commenting on the 27,000 aliens at large in Britain and gives his views on how to end the spy peril. His solution is to focus on the naturalised German population in Britain, and treat any who gained their naturalisation certificate in the seven years before 1915 as other aliens, and intern them.

The “naturalised” are still “German at heart”. Naturalisation is usually adopted either for spying or for business purposes, and to suppose that the mere fact makes a German into anything else is to argue a pitiful ignorance of human nature, and particularly of the German nature.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Birmingham Daily Post, “The meeting of Parliament”, 2 February 1915.

<sup>82</sup> Manchester Courier, “Aliens at large”, 4 February 1915.

<sup>83</sup> W Le Queux, *German Spies in England* (Toronto, 1915).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p71.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.202.

All those who have not been naturalised, Le Queux states, should be deported. Finally, Le Queux appeals to his readers to use their powers to form a vigorous public opinion to root out the spy in our midst and drive the Government to action on enemy aliens:

The lack of organisation for dealing with these aliens is the most deplorable feature of the administration. There are three separate authorities. The navy, military and police all act according to their own interpretations of the Defence of the Realm Act, and when one or other takes drastic steps for the removal of alien enemies, somebody who stands in the background reverses the process. A truly amazing state of affairs.<sup>87</sup>

Criticism and distrust of McKenna and the Home Office over the enemy alien issue continued into the spring of 1915. This criticism was part of something wider and possibly as a reaction to the realisation that the war had not ended by Christmas 1914. The Government and public opinion had to shift their assumptions from the outbreak of war and think about winning the war over the longer term. This meant turning and focusing the economy and the Home Front population on munitions production, moving the country from a pre-war to a true war economy. This period of change, to a war economy, would lead to the establishment of the Ministry of Munitions, the move to a coalition government and a change in emphasis for enemy alien and internment policy. Lloyd George summed this period up in March 1915 during a debate in the House of Commons, 'Instead of business as usual, we want victory as usual'.<sup>88</sup>

As the country shifted from business as usual to total war, Lord Northcliffe, owner of the *Daily Mail*, instigated a campaign for change and the replacement of Kitchener at the War Office. Beckett notes:

Northcliffe had wanted to force Kitchener from office, but the ramping up of press agitation in the 'shell scandal' followed rather than precipitated a major change in the government direction of the war. That change itself made Britain the first of those states at war to attempt any systematic reorganisation of industry geared to winning the war.<sup>89</sup>

With this in mind, it is interesting to think about whether the press focus on the enemy alien issues was also a by-product of Northcliffe's campaign to see governmental change.

Throughout March, Baroness Editha Glanusk wrote letters to the editors of regional newspapers to appeal to the countrywomen of Great Britain. She asked them to sign a petition she was sending to the House of Commons. The petition was to draw the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.220.

<sup>88</sup> I Beckett, *The Making of the First World War* (London, 2012). p.86.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.68.

attention of the Government to the great numbers of enemy aliens who were at large in the country and the danger of espionage.<sup>90</sup> In April, after finishing her petition, Editha Glanusk was again writing letters to regional newspapers. Under the principles of 'Britain for the British' she asked that all women should join an, all British, movement called the 'Anti-German League'.<sup>91</sup> She asked that supporters: 'refuse to employ or sanction the employment of any German or alien enemy' and that the first act of the league would be to fund a club house for British waiters.

The spark that truly lit the enemy alien issue bonfire on the home front in May 1915 was the sinking of the British passenger liner, *Lusitania* on Friday 7 May. The *Lusitania* was hit by a German U-boat torpedo off Kinsale Point, Ireland. The liner had been on her way back from New York to Liverpool. The ship sunk with the loss of 1,198 passengers and crew. Georgina Lee notes in her diary the reaction to the *Lusitania*'s sinking,

The effect of the sinking of the ship has been to arouse a fierce anti-German feeling throughout the country against all the naturalised English Germans and Austrians. They were turned out bodily from the Stock Exchange yesterday by fellow members. Strong measures, such as wholesale internment, are clamoured for by the whole country. There are 20,000 people of German origin at large in London alone, and they constitute a real danger.<sup>92</sup>

The *Manchester Courier* summed up the country's mood in the wake of the *Lusitania*'s sinking:

There is an uneasy feeling in the country about enemy aliens at large, and about their sympathisers who are naturalised. Hundreds of Germans by birth have anglicised their names, there are some half-German English, and many German Jews, all of whom are quietly pro-German and able to work harm to this country. There is a general feeling that in many ways information is getting through to Germany that she should not have, and there are certain movements and propaganda being engineered quietly here by a powerful and numerous body of German sympathisers who are lying low, but doing injury to the country that fattens them.<sup>93</sup>

The mood was first expressed as rhetoric as individuals called for reprisals against Germans. Lord Charles Beresford, speaking 24 hours later at a recruiting rally on Southsea Common, suggested using rich German aliens as hostages for the proper

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<sup>90</sup> Manchester Courier, "Women's petition to the Commons", 12 March 1915.

<sup>91</sup> Surrey Mirror and Country Post, "Anti-German League", 16 April 1915.

<sup>92</sup> Roynon, op. cit., p.106. [Diary entry for Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 1915].

<sup>93</sup> Manchester Courier, "Germans in our midst", 8 May 1915.

treatment of our men.<sup>94</sup> Mr Groves, of Nottingham, went further to suggest the use of enemy aliens as human shields aboard British ships.

Why should not a number of them be carried as hostages, isolated and under guard on every British passenger and merchant vessel which sails. This, I think, would prove an adequate protection, as even pirates would have some consideration for their own kith and kin. Furthermore, the life would certainly prove more healthy than the doleful far niente existence which we provided them with at present in the stately homes of England and at the concentration camps.<sup>95</sup>

The anti-German feeling first turned into action in Liverpool, where local residents attacked pork butchers and other properties believed to belong to German immigrants on 8 and 9 May. The wrecking and looting of shops and businesses continued throughout the weekend. As the *Lusitania*'s port of registry and the place where the *Lusitania* had been due to dock, Liverpool had a connection and so its population erupted first. It was also unfortunate that the news broke on a Friday, which gave local mobs much of the weekend to riot before being back at work. The unrest reached such a magnitude that the licensed premises across the city were forced to close at six o'clock in the evening, the local fire brigade dealt with ten fires at wrecked properties and the Chief Constable of Liverpool put in an official request for military aid to help take back control of the city from the anti-German mobs.<sup>96</sup>

The anti-German backlash then spread up the ship canal to Manchester and Salford on 10 May. Any premises with a vaguely German or Austrian connection in Openshaw, Gorton, Oldham, Ashton, Rusholme and the Oxford Road areas of Manchester found their windows smashed and their properties looted. One set of premises in Manchester had painted over the wooden shutters in big white letters, 'We are Russians' in a vain attempt to save the building from the anti-German crowds.

In London, the backlash started in a civilised manner from within the City on 9 May. Members of Lloyd's of London and the Stock Exchange marched in demonstration at the sinking of the *Lusitania* through the City to Parliament. They also gave notice to 130 German members of the London Stock Exchange. The anti-German feeling then boiled over in the East End of London and turned into rioting. Mobs in Smithfield, Aldgate, Bethnal Green, Poplar, Bow and Stepney targeted German properties for wrecking and looting. German bakers in London appeared to be a particular target, with

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<sup>94</sup> A Lentin, *Banker, Traitor, Scapegoat, Spy?* (London, 2013). p.55.

<sup>95</sup> Nottingham Evening Post, "Interned aliens as hostages", 8 May 1915.

<sup>96</sup> TNA: HO 45/10944/257142/36 Disturbances: Anti-German riots, 1914-1920.

137 being looted and taken out of action by 14 May.<sup>97</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst believed that the latest round of anti-German riots in the East End of London were more than just a fierce clamour for reprisals, and more opportunistic:

The meanest elements among the jingoes worked up the first of the anti-German riots. These were deliberately organised, in no sense of spontaneous popular outburst; but the prospects of looting without fear of punishment made its appeal to certain sections of the poor and ignorant. Many a home was wrecked; many a peaceable working family lost its all. Stones were flung, children injured.<sup>98</sup>

The rioting then spread out from the East End of London, up through 'Little Germany' in Fitzrovia, near to Tottenham Court Road and out to Camden, Kentish Town, St John's Wood and Notting Hill Gate districts. Georgina Lee recorded the mood:

There have been riots in various parts of London today against the Germans. At St John's Wood, a housemaid came in very excited and saying she couldn't get through the crowd near the house. A German was being molested, and his house attacked. He had six carrier pigeons there. The police had to protect him. Many such scenes occur everywhere and thank goodness the people are fighting this danger themselves, instead of waiting for the Government to take slow measures.<sup>99</sup>

In Manchester, riots continued as the anti-German feeling spread across the Pennines to the cities of Bradford, Leeds, Hull, Sheffield and Newcastle. The situation was so serious across the country that the topic of enemy aliens and internment was discussed in the Cabinet meeting on Monday 10 May. Charles Hobhouse noted in his diary:

We had some talk about aliens, some being for interning all, but W.R. and W.S.C. were for observing the scrap of paper which naturalised aliens have acquired. K. remarked that no injurious actions have been traced to any alien at large, while P.M. declared that nothing would induce him to repudiate any grant of the full privileges of citizenship to all naturalised persons.<sup>100</sup>

Interestingly, Lord Kitchener, as War Secretary (who had under his wing at the War Office the Secret Service Bureau) had been right to point out during discussions the fact that no acts of sedition had been tracked back to enemy aliens at large in Britain.

In the House of Common, three days later, on Thursday 13 May 1915, the Prime Minister defined the Government's enemy alien policy:

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<sup>97</sup> TNA: HO 45/10944 Disturbances: Anti-German riots, 1914-1920.

<sup>98</sup> Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, p.170.

<sup>99</sup> Roynon, *op. cit.*, p.107. [Diary entry for Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 1915].

<sup>100</sup> David, *op. cit.*, p.241 [W.R. Walter Runciman, President, Board of Trade, W.S.C. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, K. Horatio Herbert Kitchener, War Secretary]

In accordance with the undertaking I gave the House yesterday I ask the Indulgence of the House, in order to fulfil that undertaking, to state the plan which the Government propose to adopt with regard to the treatment of alien enemies in this country. Persons of hostile origins residing in this country will be divided into two classes – those who have been naturalised and have therefore become British subjects, and those who have not. Dealing first with the non-naturalised aliens, there are at this moment 19,000 interned and there are some 40,000 (24,000 men and 16,000 women) at large. We propose that in existing circumstances, *prima facie*, all adult males of this class should, for their own safety, and that of the community, be segregated and interned, or, if over military age, repatriated. This will not require fresh legislation. We recognise that there will be cases which call for exceptional treatment. The women and children in suitable cases will be repatriated, but there will, no doubt, be many instances in which justice and humanity will require that they should be allowed to remain.

It is proposed to set up an advisory body of a judicial character, somewhat similar to that presided over by the Hon. and learned Member for Exeter (Mr. Duke), by which applications for exemption from the general rule of internment can be considered. The Home Secretary will be responsible for ascertaining who are the persons to whom the policy now announced applies. As soon as the naval and military authorities have provided the necessary accommodation, those who do not secure exemption from the advisory body will be interned.

In the case of the naturalised aliens, who are in law British subjects (numbering about 8000), we think the *prima facie* presumption should be the other way; but exceptional cases, established to the satisfaction of the advisory body will be specially dealt with. There must be a power of internment in case of proved necessity of danger.<sup>101</sup>

Mr Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative party, then stood and welcomed the Government's proposed actions:

I desire to say that I heartily welcome the statement which the right hon. gentleman has just made. It is quite evident that the country is thoroughly aroused on this question and is liable to get out of hand...

After hearing the course which the Government proposed to adopt, and which the right hon. gentleman has outlined today, I said to him – and I think it right to say it publicly – that I could think of no better plan than that which is now proposed to the House of Commons.<sup>102</sup>

The Government's proposals, laid out by the Prime Minister, did not change the direction of enemy alien policy. What the proposal did do was add structure, permanence and transparency to the internment process. Whereas before the announcement the exemption from internment had been a hap-hazard affair, at the discretion of the local police and based on two recommendations on behalf of the alien individual from pillars of the community, the introduction of an advisory panel added rigour to the process. Called the

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<sup>101</sup> TNA: KV1 /65 Control of aliens in the United Kingdom, volume II, 1914 to 1915 [Amongst the newspapers cuttings in a KV file is a printed copy of the parliamentary debate on alien enemies].

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Advisory Committee for England and Wales, it was chaired by Mr Justice Sanley and included four members of Parliament and another high court judge. Adding an external facing bureaucratic layer to the process did not change the requirement for an exemption from internment, or deportation, but the committee gave comfort to the public.

Even repatriation was not a new government policy and had been in place since October 1914, when agreement had been reached with the Governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary. In six months, 795 German and 542 Austro-Hungarian males had already been repatriated from Britain.<sup>103</sup> Asquith's speech and the tightening of enemy alien policy was an example of the Government's move from 'Business as usual to victory as usual' as it moved the country to a full time war economy.

However, from an intelligence point of view the mere act of the Prime Minister standing up in the House of Commons confirmed and enhanced the public's fear levels toward enemy aliens. It confirmed to people on the home front their impression of reality that all enemy aliens were a threat to Britain's security. For Asquith it was a case of 'damned if you do and damned if you do not do anything.' No amount of correct intelligence on the actual threat of enemy aliens was going to sit well with or mirror the belief system of a hysterical public.

By Friday 14 May, the anti-German riots and mob rule began to die down. It was then that the public and newspapers reflected on the events of the previous days and the Government's action in handling the enemy alien issue. The *Dundee Courier* appealed to its readers that the riots had served their purpose and should stop.

The Government has been wakened up to the necessity of placing every German now in Britain in a place of safety. Already the scheme for internment of alien enemies is well under way. Many hundreds of non-military age will be repatriated within the next few weeks.

It is not British to take vengeance at the expense of a helpless minority. Our real vengeance must be sought abroad – in France and Flanders. Assuming the Government is in earnest, the rioting should now cease.<sup>104</sup>

The *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* reminded its readers:

At the moment, a good deal of what might be useful energy is being spent over the aliens. We cannot punish the crimes of Germany by breaking the windows of

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<sup>103</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 70 (1915), cols 1758-9. [15 March].

<sup>104</sup> Dundee Courier, "No more Rioting", 15 May 1915.

German residents here. It is probably the best thing to intern all enemy aliens, but that is about as much as we can do.<sup>105</sup>

The article then went on to say something actually based in fact as to why not all enemy aliens needed internment, which the Secret Service Bureau had learned through five years of investigations and intelligence reporting.

After all, we shall not find the German spies among those who are plainly and unmistakably German. Espionage is not done by Teuton gentlemen who come to you and say "Voz you got any meelitary information I might send to der Kaiser?" It is a trifle more subtle than that.<sup>106</sup>

A 'National Reservist' wrote to the *Liverpool Echo* pointing out who would have to pay for all this wanton destruction that had taken place.

Have the people of England gone mad? Surely they must know that all the damage they do to German households and shops will have to be paid for, and by English ratepayers, and having created violence and wholesale destruction to property with the consequent panic amongst peaceful citizens, which will certainly be a cause of satisfaction to the Kaiser and his crew. The continuance of these rights must, of necessity, harass the military authorities, who may be compelled to draft troops into the affected districts, thereby lessening Britain's chance of a successful issue of this terrible war, or at least, prolonging its termination.

We based ourselves on a Christian nation, and I should not let vengeance fall upon innocent persons, whose only crime is that they are German born. From the commencement of the war, all and every alien should have been interned, thereby preventing all this inhuman outbreak.<sup>107</sup>

Editha Glanusk was again writing letters to newspapers on 14 May to publicise the influence of her petition in the campaign to have all enemy aliens interned. 'A million signatures and more were received, and as we have now presented our petition to the House of Commons and achieved our object, we, the women of Great Britain and Ireland, can feel we have at least done our share and backed up those who are fighting on our behalf.'<sup>108</sup> However two months later, in July, a report from the select committee on public petitions stated, 'that some of the signatures to the women's petition praying for the removal from the coast and internment of enemy aliens, and purporting to be signed by 467,472 persons, are in the same handwriting.'<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Yorkshire Telegraph and Star, "By the way", 14 May 1915.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Liverpool Echo, "Our letter box", 12 May 1915.

<sup>108</sup> Manchester Courier, "Women and the aliens", 15 May 1915.

<sup>109</sup> Manchester Evening News, "The select committee on public petitions", 17 July 1915.



Britain was not the only country to experience anti-German riots in May 1915. In Johannesburg, South Africa, on 13 May anti-German rioting saw fifty-one buildings wrecked and their contents burned or smashed.<sup>110</sup> In Russia, Moscow experienced an anti-German pogrom between 27 and 29 May. Here rioters plundered and burned more than 200 homes and 400 businesses.<sup>111</sup> There were also anti-German disturbances in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America.

An immediate effect of the riots was food shortages in the British towns and cities that had borne the brunt of the property damage. As bakers and butchers were in the public's imagination as the main occupations for German and Austrian enemy aliens, these businesses became the main focus for attacks. In Sheffield, the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* pointed out that rioters would pay dearly for their actions, with the price of black puddings set to rise.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, in the East End of London long queues formed outside any bakers' shops left as the area became the centre of a bread and flour famine. It also meant the end of a much loved supper dish in the East End: pease pudding and hot saveloys. This had been a German speciality, so was now off the menu for patriotic East Enders. The *Birmingham Gazette* suggested that the queues gave the rioters a chance to reflect on their actions: 'you cannot combine the fun of smashing the bakehouse overnight with eating the morning roll.'<sup>113</sup>

The anti-German riots across the country and the call to 'intern them all' were also a part of something bigger that led to the formation of a Coalition Government on 25 May 1915. The Bryce report, based on the investigation of the 'Committee on alleged German outrages' and chaired by James Bryce, was published on 12 May. Formed to focus on the alleged German army atrocities carried out in Belgium and France, the committee's conclusions fanned the anti-German feeling. The Committee concluded that the German Army in its conduct had organised massacres of civil populations, murdered innocent civilians, had wantonly looted and destroyed property, and had used civilians as human shields in its advances. Two days later, on 14 May, the shell crisis rocked Asquith's Government in the form of an article in *The Times* newspaper. The article by the military correspondent, Charles á Court Repington, linked the failure of the British Army at the Battles of Aubers Ridge on the Western Front to a lack of shells being

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<sup>110</sup> Birmingham Gazette, "Riots on the Rand", 14 May 1915.

<sup>111</sup> Winter, *Civil Society Volume III*, p.227. T Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War 1914-1918* (London, 2010). p.82.

<sup>112</sup> Yorkshire Telegraph and Star, "By the way", 15 May 1915.

<sup>113</sup> Birmingham Gazette, "No German shops, bread famine follows Poplar rioting", 15 May 1915.

produced. Then, on 15 May, Jacky Fisher resigned as First Sea Lord over the Gallipoli campaign. All these events, including the stricter enforcement of enemy alien policy, moved the government's and the home front's commitment to a total war footing. As Gerard DeGroot comments: 'There was nothing wrong with Britain's commitment to the war, what was lacking was an organised approach,' and events in May 1915 brought structure.<sup>114</sup>

One casualty from the formation of the Coalition Government was Lord Haldane, who had been Lord Chancellor within Asquith's cabinet since June 1912. He had been seen as pro-German and had made a number of visits to Germany in the years leading up to the war. A victim of a xenophobic press campaign, Haldane noted the results: 'On one day, in response to an appeal in the *Daily Express*, there arrived at the House of Lords no less than 2600 letters of protest against my supposed disloyalty to the interests of the nation.'<sup>115</sup> Even after his departure from government, in May 1915, some members of the public continued the vendetta against Haldane. 'But before the War ended in our victory I had, of course, a disagreeable time. I was threatened with assault in the street, and I was on occasions in some danger of being shot at.'<sup>116</sup>

By October 1915 the Secret Service Bureau reported that eighty-four percent of the male enemy alien population had been interned. The Bureau had estimated the numbers of male enemy aliens of military age at large in the United Kingdom from the census returns of 1911 and included an additional ten percent to allow for the period 1911 to 1914. There was also an allowance of four years as regards present military age. They believed the population of enemy alien males to be 39,900. German males made up the bulk of this number at 26,761, followed by Austro-Hungarian males at 8,078 and finally Turkish males at 1,434. In October 1915, the Government used this estimated grand total to account for the male enemy aliens of military age still at large.

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<sup>114</sup> G DeGroot, *Back in Blighty: The British at Home in World War I* (London, 2014), p.115.

<sup>115</sup> R Haldane, *Richard Burdon Haldane: An Autobiography* (Edinburgh, 1929), p.283

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p.287.

Table 14. United Kingdom enemy alien account. Male enemy aliens of military age only, October 1914.<sup>117</sup>

Accounted for to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 1915		
Disposal		Total
Interned		32,458
At large in London	3,748	5,805
At large in Provinces & Wales	1,677	
At large in Scotland	276	
At large in Ireland	104	
Departure from the UK, and balance		1,637
Estimated Grand Total		39,900

From this table, the Secret Service Bureau estimated, as of 31 October, that 15.2% of the male enemy alien population were at large. The ‘at large’ label can appear misleading as these alien enemies were not truly ‘at large’. They were still required to abide by the Aliens Restriction Act even if they had been granted an exemption from internment or deportation. Those enemy aliens ‘at large’ in London were additionally bound to a curfew between the hours of nine p.m. and five a.m. at their registered place of residence. This had been put into place by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner following the May anti-German riots, and the curfew started from 18 May 1915.

The Secret Service Bureau also reported on the number of naturalised British males, which had been revised down since Asquith’s speech to the House of Commons in May.

Table 15. Naturalised British males of hostile origin.<sup>118</sup>

Naturalised British males of hostile origin	
England and Wales	5,701
Scotland	437
Elsewhere	100
Total	6,238

Of the 6,238 naturalised British males of hostile origin some 28 individuals had been interned by the end of October 1915.

<sup>117</sup> TNA: KV 1/65: Control of aliens including CID sub-committee: M.I.5 policy matters, 1914-1915.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

After the introduction of a coalition government, the rest of 1915 and the first months of 1916 were relatively quiet in relation to the issue of enemy aliens and internment. The issue continued to bubble away in the background through articles published in Horatio Bottomley's ultra-patriotic *John Bull* magazine, as well as the formation of the Anti-German Union in July 1915. Among the Anti-German Union stated aims were:

To advocate permanently strengthening existing laws and orders in counsel for the registration of aliens, and to promote legislation for preventing Germans from changing their names for trade or other purposes.

To advocate legislation for preventing persons of German birth from obtaining government or public contracts if the goods can be supplied by British firms.

To advocate reform of the naturalisation laws in order to prevent naturalised Germans from being members of the privy council or either Houses of Parliament, or from holding any office in any of the public services; to prevent the holding of civic or other honours or titles by persons of German birth; and to urge that in future British consuls shall be British subjects.<sup>119</sup>

Enemy aliens were also kept in the home front's imagination through popular spy literature. Sir Robert Baden-Powell's *My Adventures as a Spy*, published in the autumn of 1915, would have appealed to the amateur, armchair spy hunters of Britain.

As a rule, there are residential spies, who have lived for months or years as small tradesmen, etc, in the towns and villages now included in the theatre of war. On the arrival of the German invaders they have chalked on their doors, "Not to be destroyed. Good people here," and have done it for some of their neighbours also in order to divert suspicion. In their capacity of naturalised inhabitants they are in a position, of course, to gain valuable tactical information for the commanders of the troops. And their different ways communicating it are more than ingenious.<sup>120</sup>

John Buchan's *The Thirty Nine Steps* first appeared as a serial in Blackwood's Magazine during August and September 1915 before being published in book form in October 1915.<sup>121</sup> The plot of the book finds hero Richard Hannay, a man on the run, travelling the length of Britain tracking down and evading a German spy ring called the 'Black Stone', who had planned to assassinate the Greek Premier whilst he was on a visit to London.

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<sup>119</sup> The Cornishman (Penzance) "Anti-German Union", 1 July 1915. [The Anti-German Union changed its name to British Empire Union in 1916.]

<sup>120</sup> R Baden-Powell, *My Adventures as a Spy* (London, 1915), p.10.

<sup>121</sup> J Buchan, *The Thirty Nine Steps* (Edinburgh, 1915).

The press and public's enemy alien spy obsession once again became a national talking point in June 1916. Newspaper headlines linked the death of Lord Kitchener to German spies at large in Britain. The Dundee's *Evening Telegraph and Post* front page asked: 'Empire Mourns Tragic Death of Lord Kitchener. Was There a Spy at Work?' and the *Liverpool Echo* speculated: 'The Spy Theory. "K" a Victim?'<sup>122</sup> Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, then Secretary of State for War, had been aboard the *HMS Hampshire*, which sank in the North Sea on its way to Russia. On Monday 5 June, *HMS Hampshire*, a Devonshire class armoured cruiser, left Scapa Flow for Russia. Battling a force nine gale, the cruiser struck a German mine off mainland Orkney and sank. 12 crewmen made it ashore. The rest of the 643 sailors and 7 passengers drowned, including Lord Kitchener. Lord Kitchener had been embarking on a diplomatic mission to Russia and those close to Kitchener assumed that his plans had been leaked to a German spy. His death led to another intense outburst of public feeling which again focused upon enemy aliens still at large in the British Isles. The rallying cry; 'intern them all' was again heard across the country. A letter to the *Aberdeen Evening Express* on Thursday 8 June demanded the renewal of internment for every German:

That a serious menace exists in the number of German spies, naturalised or otherwise, still at large in our midst is abundantly evident to everyone. With the possible exception of the Government, and the great calamity which has befallen the nation in the tragic end of Lord Kitchener - the work undoubtedly of spies - makes further delay in this matter suicidal.<sup>123</sup>

The calls for internment boiled over into anti-German disturbances in the Clerkenwell and Islington areas of London. These were isolated incidents with the focus of the angry crowds being premises thought to be occupied by Germans and Austrians. The British Empire Union, which had changed its name from 'Anti-German Union', demonstrated in Hyde Park, London, with an attendance estimated at just over a thousand people. The crowd voted for a resolution that advocated: 'all persons of enemy origin should be rigorously excluded from military areas and from government employment: and that all Germans, naturalised and unnaturalised, should be interned forthwith, including those who have been released from interment.'<sup>124</sup> Councils around the country

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<sup>122</sup> *Evening Telegraph and Post* (Dundee) "Empire mourns tragic death of Lord Kitchener. Was there a spy at work?," 7 June 1916.

*Liverpool Echo*, "The spy theory," 7 June 1916.

<sup>123</sup> *Evening Express* (Aberdeen), "Menace of the Hun spy," 8 June 1916.

<sup>124</sup> *Nottingham Evening Post*, "10,000 alien enemies in London alone," 14 June 1916.

also passed resolutions and petitions calling for the Government to detain or repatriate all aliens.<sup>125</sup>

Spies and the ‘*Unseen Hand*’ seemed to be to blame for most of the country’s ills in the summer of 1916 and *Punch magazine* reflected this mood in a humorous article:

I like the Unseen Hand. It makes excellent copy. It sounds like a Sherlock Holmes story. And you are not under the disagreeable necessity of proving your facts. You cannot place the hand-cuffs on an Unseen Hand. Just let us work the Unseen Hand together.

Who is it that protects Government officials possessing wives with German uncles? The Unseen Hand.

Who keeps the egregious Asquith in power? (or, alternatively, who intrigues against our patriotic PREMIER?) An Unseen Hand.

Who write those articles in *The Daily News* and *The Daily Mail*? Unseen Hand.

Who raised the price of butter, bread, meat, drink, furs, revenues - everything save pew rent? I am justified in attributing this to the Unseen Hand.

Who let's the alien enemy in our midst go uninterned? Why, an Unseen Hand slams the prison gate in their very faces.

Who plays scales on a Hun piano with two fingers in the next house at this very moment? An Unseen (and accursed) Hand.

Who is it that bribed me to write this article? I am not quite sure, but I trust there is an Unseen (and benevolent) Hand in the background.

Who is it that works to give the British public the jumps? I fear I am of a suspicious nature, but there may be an Unseen Hand writing rumours about an Unseen Hand.<sup>126</sup>

In July 1916 the press attention moved onto the treatment of enemy aliens detained in internment camps. There had been authorised visits to the civilian camps for internment, not only for officials of the United States embassy, but also for a party of British Journalists. Between March and July 1916, Mr Boylston A Beal, of the Staff of the German Division of the American Embassy, visited twenty-three internment camps around Britain.<sup>127</sup> These reports of his visits were published in September 1916. The British journalists toured two camps, at Leigh in Lancashire and Donington Hall near Derby. Their articles reported back that the stories of German prisoners living the life of luxury were untrue. There had even been rumours of the Prime Minister’s wife Margot

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<sup>125</sup> These public declarations included Derby, Sheffield, Birmingham, Falkirk, Manchester, Wolverhampton and Hastings Council.

<sup>126</sup> *Punch magazine* (London), “The Unseen Hand”, 12 July 1916.

<sup>127</sup> His Majesty’s Stationary Office, *Reports of Visits of Inspection Made by Officials of the United States Embassy to Various Internment Camps in the United Kingdom* (London, 1916).

playing tennis at Donnington Hall camp with German prisoners and sending them food parcels containing government secret plans.<sup>128</sup> Newspaper articles on the journalists' visit to Donington Hall made reference to those infamous parcels and the camp Commandant set the record straight. 'The printed statements as to parcels having been sent in by a prominent personage were, he said, quite untrue – no such parcels were ever received.'<sup>129</sup>

Coinciding with the concern over the fair treatment of enemy aliens in Britain during 1916 and 1917 were a number of books that focused upon the plight of British aliens in Germany. By the summer of 1916 the German and Austrian enemy aliens in internment camps, who had been locked up in some cases for two years, held no intelligence material valuable to a hostile government, even if there had been any spies among them. The enemy aliens had become valuable, as the war went on, as hostages for the fair treatment of British prisoners in Germany. The movement from spy novels to hostage literature highlights this subtle change. In the summer of 1916 the author Cecily Sidgwick, under the pseudonym of Mrs Alfred Sidgwick, published *Salt and Savour*.<sup>130</sup> The author was herself born and brought up in London by German parents and so her books often contrasted German and British attitudes. *Salt and Savour* was no exception. A novel telling the story of an Englishwoman, Brenda Müller, born to German parents in London, her father came from Heidelberg and her mother from Berlin. Although of pure German blood as pointed out by her cousin and future husband Captain Lothar Erdmann, Brenda thinks of herself as English. The story starts in London with Captain Erdmann visiting the Müllers during 1910. Captain Erdmann takes trips to Aldershot, Chatham and Portsmouth during his stay at the Müllers. To the reader in 1916 the thought of a German Army Captain visiting significant centres of the British military and navy is a red flag and marks him as a potential spy.

Of course Brenda fails to realise this, and within two years marries the Captain and moves to Berlin. She finds living in Berlin and getting used to German customs difficult, missing the English sense of fair play in particular. While she struggles with the different cultural attitudes, she finds herself isolated and in a loveless marriage. Her cold German husband treats her cruelly and courts another woman. Holidaying in the Black Forest with some members of her 'English family' in August 1914, the local population are aggressive towards them for being British. Brenda then learns that war is

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<sup>128</sup> A De Courcy, *Margot at War: love and betrayal in Downing Street, 1912-1916* (London, 2014), p.240.

<sup>129</sup> *Birmingham Daily Mail*, "Donington Hall, Commandant and fables about expenditure," 20 July 1916.

<sup>130</sup> A Sidgwick, *Salt and Savour* (London, 1916). [When the book was published in the United States in 1917 it was retitled 'Salt of the Earth'].

imminent, and while the English members of her party flee towards Strasbourg for a route back to England, she returns to Berlin. On the train back to Berlin she notices the frosty reception given to anybody suspected of being English by her fellow passengers. She witnesses a fellow Englishman shot and murdered in cold blood whilst standing in a train carriage corridor just for being an English 'pig-dog'.

When Brenda gets back to Berlin she asks her husband to let her leave and go back to England. Captain Erdmann has had his mobilization papers and is packing up the family home. He demands she stays in Berlin, telling her that as the wife of a German officer she should remain in Germany. She is then made to live with her in-laws as Captain Erdmann goes off to his regiment and joins the advance across Belgium. Her German family treat her with suspicion and keep her isolated. By September 1914 her German family find Brenda a liability and would rather she was interned. Rather than going to a German internment camp she is sent to be with her husband who is stationed in Brussels. Unhappy, and abused by Germans in Brussels, Brenda's husband tells her, 'If you are not satisfied with what I arrange you can try an internment camp. I'm in no mood for an argument. You are a visible danger to me. You are a hindrance to my career.'<sup>131</sup>

While in Brussels, Brenda learns about the German atrocities in Louvain from English newspapers and passing refugees. When she confronts her husband, he decides that Brenda can go back to England on the condition that he travels with her. Crossing from Ostend to Dover, Captain Erdmann uses an American passport and then disappears, leaving Brenda to make the journey to London alone. Erdmann is later arrested, taken to the Tower of London, court-martialled and shot for being a German spy.

Back with her parents in their St John's Wood home Brenda recounts the aggressive atmosphere and what she had experienced in Germany and Belgium.

She told them of insults she had received from common folk in the streets, of August's lecture when an audience of the better class had threatened her; of sitting next to a woman in a restaurant who spat into her cup of coffee, and of the ghoulish joy shown everywhere in the abuse of wounded prisoners and in the slaughter of civilians by land and sea.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Sedgwick, op. cit., p.265.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p.287.



Brenda then asks her father whether he would anglicise the family name in the future.

“Certainly not,” said Mr. Müller. He had two sons and a son-in-law in the forces; and if before the war he could have hesitated between the country of his fathers and the country of his children he had no hesitations now. England had many devoted sons with foreign names. The list of men giving life and limb for her showed it.<sup>133</sup>

Punch magazine’s review of the book concludes:

Of course the value of *Salt and Savour* (Methuen) depends on how real Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick’s opportunities have been of studying the Teuton in his native lair. I must say that the picture- very far from pleasant- seems to fit the original, though no doubt one has to make some allowance for war-prejudice. But the behaviour of Captain Erdmann, who married Brenda, an Englishman of German extraction (an unhappy class these bitter days), and of Professor Zorn the disgruntled Anglophobe, offers, even in their pre-war life, such a wonderful forecast of the arrogance, the fatuous boastfulness, and the hysteria that we have seen in the official conduct and utterance of Germany during this War, and particularly in these days when we are so gloriously getting our own, that the presumption is all in favour of Mrs Sidgwick.<sup>134</sup>

In the spring of 1917, the letters of a British alien internee in Ruhleben camp to his mother were published, together with other reports on the conditions, and some illustrations of the camp.<sup>135</sup> Ruhleben Internment camp, on the outskirts of Berlin, had been a racecourse before the war. The stable lofts and horse boxes were converted to house over 5,000 British alien internees. Ruhleben camp and its conditions had been brought to the attention of the House of Lords in July 1916, when Lord Devonport asked what His Majesty’s Government were doing to mitigate the treatment of British civilian prisoners there.<sup>136</sup>

The book starts with a letter from Sir Timothy Eden that had been published in *The Times*. Dated 22 November 1916, the letter states the case for a wholesale exchange of civilian prisoners. Sir Timothy Calvert Eden was the older brother of Anthony Eden, who would later become British Prime Minister from 1955-1957.<sup>137</sup> On the outbreak of war, he had been arrested in Germany as an alien and interned at the Ruhleben camp. Nearly two years later, in March 1916 he was released from Ruhleben in an exchange of prisoners with the British. Eden’s letter called for an exchange of all German enemy aliens interned in Britain.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Punch Magazine, “Our Booking Office”, 18 October 1916.

<sup>135</sup> D Sladen (ed), *In Ruhleben, Letters from a prisoner* (London, 1917).

<sup>136</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 22 (1916), col. 578. [5 July].

<sup>137</sup> D Thorpe, *Eden* (London, 2004).

There is only one way of obtaining the release of the British civilians. We must give Germany all of her civilians in exchange. That is to say that we must give 26,000 and receive 4,000. The disadvantages of such a step are obvious. But, granted that Germany will gain 20,000 more fighting men, what is this number compared to the millions that are now engaged in the war? The effect that 20,000 men can produce on a battlefield of nations must be so small as to be imperceptible. Such a number would be a mere drop in the ocean. Again, when these German prisoners arrive in their homes, and compare the state of affairs in their country to life in England, will they not produce a bad impression and even discontent and mistrust? And what will happen to these Germans if they are kept here till the war is over? They will quietly settle down once more to their businesses. Is this to be desired? Finally, if this exchange be effected, Germany will have 26,000 men to feed well, instead of 4,000 indifferently, and we, on the other hand, will be saved much expense.<sup>138</sup>

Sir Edward Grey had been in communication with the German Government over the subject of further civilian prisoner exchanges at the end of June 1916. The proposal had been that all British civilians at Ruhleben be exchanged for a similar number of German civilians. There had been no formal response from the German Government by early July 1916.<sup>139</sup> The basis of an equitable exchange of civilian prisoners was always going to be a stumbling point between the British and German Governments. How were 26,000 interned German aliens going to be exchanged with 5,000 interned British aliens without one side or the other losing face with its Home Front? A definite answer came at a meeting of the British War Cabinet on 28 March 1917. The War Cabinet's decision stated: 'A general exchange of interned civilians was impracticable and not in the interest of the State.'<sup>140</sup>

With the case of a wholesale exchange of civilian prisoners at the forefront of the reader's mind, the rest of Sladen's book paints a picture of the daily life, food and accommodation of the Ruhleben camp. The letters from a prisoner, who had been nicknamed 'Richard Roe' to protect his identity, ran from January 1915 to August 1916. They were supplemented with official reports on the conditions, and details of the University that the prisoners set up and sports and entertainment in the camp. It is from these insights that *Punch Magazine* judged the book to be: 'a record that all Englishmen can study with quickened sympathy and a great pride in the courage and resource of our race under conditions needlessly brutal at their worst, and never better than just endurable.'<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Sladen, op. cit., p.25.

<sup>139</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 22 (1916) col.584. [5 July].

<sup>140</sup> TNA: CAB 24/43/0037: War Cabinet; Exchange of interned civilians, 28 March 1917.

<sup>141</sup> Punch magazine, "Our Booking Office", 7 March 1917.

The book had to be careful in how it reported the conditions of the camp so as not to contravene D-notice 158 of the Defence of the Realm Act issued on 20 February 1915:

Avoid publishing any parts of statements by returning British prisoners of war which include adverse criticism of their treatment by the Germans, even if true, because of possible effect on remaining prisoners of war in their hands; 'their lot would be almost certainly be made more uncomfortable'.<sup>142</sup>

This is why the book focuses more the spirit of the British civilian prisoners to make do and improvise rather than directly comment on their treatment by their German captors.

An interesting anomaly within the Ruhleben internment camp is the inclusion of German men who had become naturalised British, even if they were pro-German. Disliked by the rest of the inmates of the camp, this group was not given separate barrack accommodation. This is attributed to the German Government following international law: 'For some reason or other, in this one matter, the Germans felt bound to observe International Law and not compel naturalized Englishmen to serve in the German Army unless they volunteered to do so, and rather than do so, the "Perfect Gentlemen" had cheerfully gone to prison.'<sup>143</sup>

The issue of Germans and German influence in Britain touched every class. The royal family were no exception. Back in May 1915, the King had struck the German and Austrian Royal Garter Knights off the Order and their Garter banners were removed from St George's chapel in Windsor. By 1917, the royal family names of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Teck and Battenberg had become labels of shame and embarrassment to George V and his relatives. After advice from Lloyd George, George V adopted the family name of 'Windsor' by royal proclamation on 17 July 1917.

Henceforth the Royal House and Family shall be styled and known as the House of Windsor. All German titles and dignities held by his Majesty and the descendants of his grand-mother, Queen Victoria, are to be relinquished and discontinued. All descendants in the male line of Queen Victoria, who are subjects of these realms, other than female descendants who may marry, or may have married, shall bear the said name of Windsor.<sup>144</sup>

Other branches of the royal family followed suit, with the Tecks becoming Cambridge and the Batttenbergs changing to Mountbatten.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Wilkinson, op. cit., p.491.

<sup>143</sup> Sladen, op. cit., p.258.

<sup>144</sup> *The Daily Mirror* (London), "The Royal House of WINDSOR", 18 July 1917.

<sup>145</sup> C Clay, *King, Kaiser, Tsar; Three Royal Cousins Who Led the World to War* (London, 2006), p.24.

The final period of intense enemy aliens and internment activity was in the summer of 1918. It was sparked by a promise made by Prime Minister Lloyd George during the Clapham by-election in June 1918. The Clapham by-election took place on 21 June and, in the run-up to polling day, the main campaign issue was the internment of all enemy aliens and denaturalisation of any aliens holding British citizenship.

On the evening of Thursday 20 June, just a day before the Clapham by-election, *The Daily Mirror's* Westminster lobby correspondent reported that the Prime Minister was proposing drastic steps regarding unnaturalised enemies. Sources close to the lobby correspondent had mentioned that Lloyd George had been in close consultation with his colleagues and that at the earliest moment his government would implement the following:

1. To secure that no naturalised aliens of enemy birth shall be employed in any government office, munitions factory or position of trust where they would handle confidential papers unless they are above all shadow of reproach; and
2. That all unnaturalised enemy aliens shall be interned forthwith.<sup>146</sup>

*The Daily Mirror* correspondent also commented that: 'the prime minister is fully aware of the strong feeling which has been aroused on the alien menace lately, and in the steps about to be taken he has unanimous backing of his cabinet colleagues.'<sup>147</sup> Rumours had been circulating in regional newspapers that Lloyd George was personally looking into the enemy aliens issue since Wednesday 19 June.<sup>148</sup>

By Sunday 23 June *The Post* devoted the whole of its back page to the rumours surrounding the Prime Minister's intervention, asking: 'Will He Comb Out The Hun?'<sup>149</sup> The paper asks a very interesting question: 'What, then, has happened to at last compel the Prime Minister to take the matter up directly?'<sup>150</sup> It is explained away as a build-up of many incidents and scandals with the latest surrounding the wife of Leverton Harris, Conservative Member of Parliament, and Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Ministry of Blockade. Elizabeth, Leverton's wife, was implicated in a government scandal and accused of visiting and carrying letters and parcels for an interned Austrian diplomat Baron Leopold von Plessen. What made the matter worse was that she had been given

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<sup>146</sup> *The Daily Mirror* (London), "Intern the all", 21 June 1918.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Liverpool Echo*, "Premier concerned. Highly placed persons and enemy prisoners," 19 June 1918.

*The Edinburgh Evening News*, "Premier and Aliens. To give personal attention to subject," 20 June 1918.

<sup>149</sup> *The Post* (Glasgow), "Will he comb out the Hun? Prime Minister and the scandal of the Alien Enemy", 23 June 1918.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

special permission by the Home Office to visit von Plessen in the Lofthouse Park internment camp, near Wakefield. What better way to deflect attention than the Prime Minister stepping in personally to take charge and order a review. As *The Post* pointed out to its readers:

In short, the scandal of the don't touch the enemy alien attitude has been rapidly becoming outrageously offensive to the great self-respecting and patriotic British public, and the Prime Minister has wisely judged the time ripe for investigation. Let him make a beginning at the Home Office.<sup>151</sup>

While Lloyd George consulted his colleagues, agitation on the issue of enemy aliens and internment continued into July. On 2 July, newspapers reported that Mr Pemberton Billing had been suspended and forcibly carried from the House of Commons for trying to raise a point of order on the question of aliens, and that the Home Secretary, Sir George Cave, was being recalled to London to deal with the enemy alien issue. Cave had been in Holland conducting prisoner of war exchange negotiations with a German delegation. Viscount Sandhurst's diary entry for 30 June to 5 July 1918:

The question of uninterned Germans is the big question of the moment and is just now very acute. Billing was kicked out of the House of Commons, i.e. taken out by force by four attendants, he wishing to move adjournment; but it was no doubt, though unrehearsed, an effective bit of stage arrangement and will answer his purpose. He got into Parliament on aeroplanes; he will get in again on uninterned Germans unless I am much mistaken. He was turned inside out before an inquiry on aeroplanes, and he would be the same re Germans, but in this country anything, true or untrue, if sensational enough serves. Meanwhile Bonar Law has staved off the Home Secretary.<sup>152</sup>

Cave was back in the House of Common on 3 July defending the record of the Advisory Committee of the Home Office on internment and applications for exemptions. Lloyd George's consultation turned into action as he appointed a committee of six of the most vocal Members of Parliament on the issue of aliens to advise him. The six were; Mr Charles Bowerman (Labour member for Deptford), Sir John Butcher (a barrister and Conservative member for York), Sir Richard Cooper (Conservative member for Walsall), Sir Henry Dalziel (a background in journalism, newspaper proprietor and Liberal member for Kirkcaldy Burghs), Mr William Joynson-Hicks (Conservative member for Brentford), and Mr Kenndy Jones (a journalist by trade and Conservative member for Hornsey). Sir Henry Dalziel took on the role of committee chairman and Sir Richard Cooper its secretary. Interestingly, two of the six members of Lloyd George's advisory committee

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Sandhurst, *1916-1918*, p.259.

had newspaper connections and three represented constituencies which had centres of enemy alien populations within them. Their report was submitted to *The Times* on 8 July 1918 and published in the newspaper on the following day. The report in the newspapers from Sir Henry Dalziel's committee addresses the Prime Minister directly: 'In accordance with your desire conveyed to us on Monday evening last we beg to submit, in a series of recommendations, our considered views on the position of aliens in this country and on the scope and character of the action that should be taken by his Majesty's Government in dealing with the problem.'<sup>153</sup> At the heart of the committee's report are fifteen recommendations:

- (1) The internment forthwith of every male enemy alien over 18, unless there is definite national or medical reasons for exemption;
- (2) That alien women of enemy origin, except those whose husbands are exempt from internment, shall, as far as practicable be repatriated;
- (3) Review by the advisory committee and the cancellation (unless there are national reasons to the contrary) of all certificates of naturalisation granted to the enemy aliens since January 1st, 1914 (the date of the coming into force of the German Imperial and state nationality law);
- (4) Cancellation of naturalisation certificates granted to enemy aliens prior to January 1st, 1914, where an advisory committee is satisfied that continuance of the certificate is contrary to the public good;
- (5) Review of neutrals' naturalisation certificates granted since August 1st, 1914;
- (6) The closest examination into the contact and association of enemies who have become naturalised neutrals or allies, and are resident, or occasionally resident, in this country;
- (7) Exchange forthwith of all persons, male or female, of enemy origin employed in any government office or department;
- (8) Removal, except on medical grounds, of all persons of enemy origin or association from all prohibited areas;
- (9) Discontinuance of the issue of passes to persons of enemy origin or association to visit prohibited areas;
- (10) All changes of name since August 1st, 1914, by persons of enemy origin to be made inoperative until six months after peace;
- (11) Winding up all enemy businesses to be completed within three months;
- (12) Winding up orders of all branches or agencies of enemy banks to be made forthwith;

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<sup>153</sup> TNA: CAB 24/57/0076 Report to the Prime Minister of Sir H Dalziel's Committee.

- (13) Revision of internment camp regulations, especially in regard to rationing, transport, leave, and visitors;
- (14) An internment camp inspection committee of members of parliament empowered to make recommendations regarding Administration;
- (15) Stricter supervision over movements on shore of neutrals employed on ships calling at British ports, and boarding of vessels by unauthorised persons prohibited.<sup>154</sup>

In its report Dalziel's committee also noted that a contributing factor to the current situation regarding aliens was the lack of co-ordination between the eight government departments involved in developing and carrying out enemy alien policy.

Sir George Cave's initial reaction to the report is contained in a memorandum written on the day same day it was published in *The Times*:

I agree with the statement of the report that much public anxiety exists on this matter, but I think that it is largely founded on a misunderstanding of the facts. The report itself shows that even members of the House of Commons who take a special interest in the alien question are imperfectly acquainted with what is now being done, and I think it probable that the public anxiety would be removed by a frank statement of the precautions which have been taken and of the results obtained.<sup>155</sup>

In the War Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 10 July the Dalziel committee report was a point of tension. An upset Austin Chamberlain pointed out to Lloyd George that the Cabinet had not been consulted before the report was made public:

A question of public policy of grave importance had been referred, without consultation with the Cabinet, to a committee of Members of Parliament who he thought not very well suited for the purpose owing to the strong views they already expressed, and their report to the Prime Minister had been published in the papers before it was seen by any member of the Cabinet.<sup>156</sup>

The Prime Minister admitted to the Cabinet that the report had been published even before he had seen it and this was improper. Lloyd George then went on to suggest he had not appointed this committee, but had merely asked Captain Guest to find out whether these individuals would be willing: 'to state definitely what suggestions they would themselves make.'<sup>157</sup> He also admitted that no official evidence had been sought or used from the Government departments concerned with enemy alien policy. However, even with the faults and the non-consultation, the Prime Minister believed: 'It was necessary, in his

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<sup>154</sup> The Devon and Exeter Gazette, "Control of enemy aliens. Drastic recommendations," 9 July 1918.

<sup>155</sup> TNA: CAB 24/57/0068 Enemy Alien memorandum by the Home Secretary, 9 July 1918.

<sup>156</sup> TNA: CAB 23/7/0006 War Cabinet meeting, 10 July 1918.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

opinion, to take some steps to reassure the reasonable element in the community that the Government were taking no improper risks.’<sup>158</sup>

The report of the Dalziel committee was discussed in a five hour debate at the House of Commons on 11 July. Sir George Cave stood and defended the Government’s record on the issue of enemy aliens since the outbreak of war and the thoroughness of the exemption from internment process. Cave also pointed out the fact that: ‘Except in the first few-weeks of the War the spies have been found not amongst subjects of enemy States, but among the subjects of other nationalities. I do not think anybody can say that the system which I have described has resulted in injury to the interests of this country.’<sup>159</sup>

By dealing in facts, Cave tried to take the emotion out of the ‘intern them all’ debate which Dalziel’s committee recommended and to ground proceedings in some reality. As the Prime Minister had pointed out to his War Cabinet before the debate, these recommendations were not influenced by government intelligence or statistics, but were opinions based on fear. Cave continued:

Still, as I said at the beginning, you must look at this matter in the light of events as they occur. You must take into account public feeling, although you must not be pressed by public feeling, however strong, into doing what is unfair or unjust. It is with that view that we have undertaken to reconsider the whole system and to consider whether it cannot be in one way or another tightened up with a view to the security of this country.<sup>160</sup>

Sir George Cave then turned his attention to the work of the Advisory Committees set up back in May 1915. He emphasised their good work and the process already in place. His focus stressed that all applications for exemptions were based on the presumption of internment. That all exemption requests from individuals were made to justify why the Advisory Committees should not follow the rule of internment. Cave thus proved that the ‘intern them all’, for enemy aliens over eighteen, recommendation from Dalziel’s committee was already in place except for reasons of national interest or medical situations.

What the Government would do with the recommendations is strengthen the existing Advisory Committees’ (one in England and one in Scotland) processes and procedures.

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918), col. 526. [11 July].

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.



The existing Advisory Committees, I think, have often obtained commendation in this House and elsewhere, and probably they would be the best committees to entrust with this work. It would, however, be quite wise, and we propose to strengthen them by certain additional members, including at least one military member, who will be able to take the military point of view on the matter. It may be that they will find it convenient not to hold all their sittings in London or Edinburgh, but to go themselves, or by some of their number, into the provinces and deal with some of the cases on the spot. I think it would be right that they should be asked to state their reasons for any exemptions that they recommend, and that it would also be right, where exemptions are granted, that the statement of reasons should be open to the public. If that course be followed, I think the public may have the fullest confidence that every alien enemy will be interned except where there is a strong reason for exemption, a reason which the public will know. I am quite sure that the adoption of that proposal which we make to-day will give general satisfaction to all those who are concerned in the action to be taken in this matter.<sup>161</sup>

Cave's proposal of having at least one military advisor, likely to be from MI5, join the existing Advisory Committees would give them extra breadth and expertise. This advisor would be able to consult on issues of enemy aliens in prohibited areas and give the associated risks to public safety. The proposal also adds authority to the committees' decisions and grounds them in military intelligence and facts. By opening up the exemption decision material to public scrutiny, the process became a transparent one, making it less likely for newspapers to play the fear card.

Before taking questions from the floor, Cave explained that the issue of naturalisation certificates would be covered under the British Nationality and Status of Aliens bill that was in the Parliamentary system and debated a day later on 12 July 1918. Among the many questions to Cave on his proposals were lengthy retorts from two authors of the recommendations, Dalziel and Joynson-Hicks. Then, three hours into the debate, Lloyd George stood up and spoke to the House of Commons:

The Government have given very careful consideration to this matter. I may say that I myself, during the last few weeks, in spite of other urgent matters, have given consideration to it, because I regarded it as a matter of great concern affecting the prosecution of the War. I agree with my hon. friends who have taken part in this debate, and with the hon. gentleman who spoke immediately after the debate opened (Sir H. Dalziel), that what really matters now is that these propositions should be carried out vigorously, rigorously, but with absolute fairness.<sup>162</sup>

The language used by the Prime Minister is important as it backs up the direction outlined by the Home Secretary. The way forward is for rigour and transparency in the approach

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<sup>161</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918), col.29. [11 July].

<sup>162</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918), cols. 573-574..

to how enemy alien policies are implemented. It advocates revision to, rather than revolution in, government policy.

The first is the character of the Committees set up for the purpose of carrying out this policy. It will depend far more upon them than the Government Departments. I was very pleased to hear from all parts of the House an expression of confidence in the Advisory Committees, and there is no doubt that they are a first-rate body of men and very able. They have done their duty patriotically, and a very difficult duty it has been to discharge. The task has been enormous, and especially I think, in view of the reasons which certainly influenced me in coming to a decision in favour of an immediate revision and change<sup>163</sup>

Again, as Cave had done earlier, Lloyd George made a point of focusing the House on the facts and the independence of the process. He advocates it as a process the home front and newspapers should put their trust in and he goes against the blanket 'intern them all' approach being recommended by the Dalziel committee.

In this case there is no doubt at all that the facts are of such a kind as to make us feel a little anxious about the fact that aliens are in positions where they can do harm. If, upon examination, absolutely impartial men come to the conclusion that there is no ground for suspicion, then aliens ought not to be interfered with. There is no doubt that men of alien blood are rendering very great service to the country.<sup>164</sup>

An interesting admission from Lloyd George during his speech was the contents of his post bag during periods of the war when things had not been going to plan for British forces.

There has never been a case of a British set-back when I have not had anonymous letters crowing over it—letters bearing British postmarks, and obviously written by Germans; indeed, they say that they are Germans. Where are they? I feel that that sort of business has got to be stopped.<sup>165</sup>

Not that implementing more rigour to government policy and review of exemptions would stop crowing letters from Germans getting to the Prime Minister.

Newspaper accounts of the debate and the government's proposals to strengthen enemy alien policy were muted. *The Daily Chronicle* observed the lack of any really substantial change:

When all is said and done, the foam and the froth of the debate, both unofficial and ministerial appear unlikely to make much difference to anybody. The agitation has been devoid of any real justification. The execution of the "stunt"

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<sup>163</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918) cols. 574-576. [11 July].

<sup>164</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918) col. 577.

<sup>165</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918) col. 576.

program in its crude form would entail many cruelties, much loss to the country, and a total lack of advantage to it.<sup>166</sup>

This view was echoed in *The Daily News*:

The Prime Minister's speech ignores the character and implications of public feeling on their alien question, and maintains it is clear that this feeling is directed ultimately against the Government and not against the alien. The Government's answer, put shortly (says the journal), is that all aliens shall be interned except those who are not to be interned. It is not a very brave answer, but at least it frees the country for the time being from the dangers with which a panic cry threatened it.<sup>167</sup>

With many newspapers reporting a lacklustre performance, the timing of the Prime Minister's personal intervention into the enemy alien issue has to be called in to question. There had been an undercurrent of 'intern them all' since the Government had decisively acted in May 1915. Not a month went by where there was not some low-level noise from a local council petitioning on the issue or the British Empire Union wanting the Prime Minister to receive a deputation to talk on the subject. What changed in June and July 1918, for Lloyd George to personally take charge?

In the alien debate in the House of Commons on 11 July, Colonel Wedgewood, Liberal MP for Newcastle-Under-Lyme, was in no doubt that Lloyd George was responsible for the public outcry: 'I think a mistake was made by the Prime Minister himself, and that the Prime Minister has encouraged this agitation in a way that is most unfortunate.'<sup>168</sup>

War Cabinet discussions on 8 July 1918 show that the intelligence had not changed regarding the threat posed by enemy aliens at large in Britain. Winston Churchill believed:

In order to quiet the public feeling which had been aroused, he was in favour of a searching review being carried out, but he was strongly opposed to any injustice being perpetrated in response to a clamour in the press. No one had proved that the country was in serious danger, and he was convinced that our Secret Service was more efficient than that of the Germans. His experience when Home Secretary and First Lord of the Admiralty had shown that the dangerous agents were not enemy aliens, but members of other nationalities. In the Civil Service there were men of enemy origin occupying high positions, who throughout the

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<sup>166</sup> The Edinburgh Evening News, "The alien peril, Premier and public interest, The Government proposal", 12 July 1918.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, vol. 108 (1918), cols. 546. [11 July.]

war had been working most loyally, and who were held in the highest regard by their colleagues. It would be most unfair to deal harshly with such men.<sup>169</sup>

Churchill endorsed and had faith in the intelligence that MI5 was providing. It is clear he was not for implementing panic measures in response to press and home front pressure.

He was aware that the present agitation was widespread, and that particular cases would be ruthlessly forced on any tribunal set up but he was equally certain that any panic measures resorted to now would be much regretted by the Government later on. He hoped that it would be stated clearly in the House of Commons that the Government did not admit that they had been in any way censurable in their administration of the laws against enemy aliens.<sup>170</sup>

At the meeting of the War Cabinet on Wednesday 10 July 1918, Major-General Sir George MacDonogh, Director of Military Intelligence, joined for the discussions on the alien question and the treatment of enemy aliens. Again the message is clear:

He thought the enemy aliens who were now at large were a military danger, but not a very great military danger. Spies were more largely drawn from neutral than from enemy countries. Further, persons naturalised before 1914 were at least as dangerous as those who had been naturalised since, because the recent cases had been very carefully investigated, whereas there was not the same rigid scrutiny before the war.<sup>171</sup>

It would appear that the Government's assessment of the threat level of enemy aliens had not changed in the summer of 1918. MacDonogh's judgement on naturalised persons since 1914 echoed Cave's and Lloyd George's speeches to the House of Commons on 11 July 1918. Therefore, if the enemy alien security risk had not changed and had in fact moved to focus on aliens from neutral countries, why was Lloyd George personally championing the issue?

The home front was war weary, and news from the Western Front had not been positive since the launch of the German offensive 'Kaiserschlacht' in March 1918. In April, Haig had issued his famous 'backs to the wall' Order of the Day dispatch.

Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight to the end.<sup>172</sup>

In a time of British army set-backs on the Western Front, was Lloyd George's personal intervention in the issue of the treatment of enemy aliens was a diversionary tactic to keep

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<sup>169</sup> M Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume IV Part 1, January 1917 – June 1919* (Boston, 1978), p.340.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> TNA: CAB 23/7/0006 War Cabinet meeting, 10 July 1918.

<sup>172</sup> G Sheffield & J Bourne, *Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters 1914-1918* (London, 2005), p.402.

the Home Front fully supportive of the war? It certainly gave people on the home front something concrete and visible to focus their fears and anger upon. With food shortages and meat rationing also impacting the home front, Lloyd George's action could be seen to be creating a distraction. The patterns for the press and public being most vocal on the issue was when Britain felt most threatened, and so, the Prime Minister appears to have jumped onto the bandwagon first to turn the situation to the Government's advantage. Such a pro-active stance placed the Government in a better light, especially given gloomy news from the Western Front. Finally the by-elections in Clapham on 21 June and Finsbury on 16 July 1918 must have had some bearing on Lloyd George thinking. Both constituencies had 'patriotic' independent candidates standing on the ticket of internment of all enemy aliens, denaturalisation and boycotting all German goods.

It is important here to note that Lloyd George had chosen to make a public commitment to this issue in the summer of 1918. Rather than public pressure, he had personally brought enemy aliens back to the forefront of home front civilians' imagination. Two days after the House of Commons debate on the Government's proposals there was a national demonstration in London's Trafalgar Square. The crowds that gathered on 13 July called for: 'The removal of all aliens of enemy blood, from all Government and public office and calls upon His Majesty's Government to take immediate steps to put into effect this resolution.'<sup>173</sup> Letters of support from the Marquess of Lincolnshire, the Lord Mayor of London, Mr Rudyard Kipling, Mr Harry Lauder and the Bishop of Birmingham were read out to the throng.

By the end of July 1918, the aliens advisory committee, under Mr Justice Sankey, came to Westminster Hall to agree the procedures to be adopted for the review of internment exemptions and certificates. However, at the same time German advances on the Western Front had again ground to a halt. Lloyd George noted in his diary on 30 July: 'News from the front very good. Believe the German offensive this year is broken.'<sup>174</sup> With the British Army on the advance following the Battle of Amiens, the fear surrounding enemy aliens faded from the Home Front's consciousness. However, the topic was still a subject for film and theatre during the last six months of the war.

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<sup>173</sup> The Hastings and St. Leonards Observer, "Intern the aliens", 6 July 1918.

<sup>174</sup> K Morgan (ed), *Lloyd George Family Letters 1885-1936* (London, 1973), p.188.

*The Leopard's Spots*, a film made for the Ministry of Information in the summer of 1918, gives a curious insight into how German enemy aliens might fare after the war.<sup>175</sup> The short film opens in a war torn Belgian town with two German soldiers attacking a mother. They grab her baby and throw it to the ground and the film then cuts to a caption: 'Once a German, always a German'. The film was often referred to by its first caption, rather than its official title.<sup>176</sup> The film then cuts to a few years hence and the two soldiers are now travelling salesmen in a typical English village. Captions read: 'And when all this is over. The men who will penetrate our peaceful English villages with German goods to sell...' and '...Will be the same Beasts. Then as they are now. The leopard cannot change his spots.' In the final scene, the German salesmen are found offering their pots and pans to a local shopkeeper. The shopkeeper's wife notices that the merchandise is made in Germany, chastises the sales men and calls the local policemen. The Germans make a hasty retreat and the last caption of the film asks the audience: 'how shall we treat them then?'

Enemy aliens were the subject of another London stage play, *The Prime Minister*, which opened at the Royalty Theatre, Dean Street, London on 30 March 1918. Sir Hall Caine, a Manx author and article writer for *The Daily Telegraph*, first saw his play performed in Atlantic City, United States in 1915. Under the title of *Margaret Schiller*, the four act drama transferred to the New Amsterdam Theatre, Broadway, New York in January 1916 where it ran for 72 performances.

Miss Ethel Irving played the part of Margaret Schiller, the daughter of naturalised German parents, who passes herself off as a Swiss Governess to the Prime Minister's daughter Peggy. The first act is set in Doctor Gottfried Schiller's London apartment during the first few days of war. The set was dressed so that audiences could instantly identify that this room was owned by a German enemy alien. On the wall of the room are hung pictures of German and Austrian composers, Beethoven, Handel, Mozart and Wagner, and next to the fireplace a portrait of the Kaiser. Doctor Schiller and his family are visited by three police inspectors checking on their alien status. The audience learn that Doctor Schiller was a naturalized German originally from Westphalia who had lived with his family in London for thirty years. During the act Doctor Schiller arrives home early from his job as a professor at the Royal College of Music and announces he has been dismissed. 'They were sorry - very sorry - but since the sinking of that troopship

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<sup>175</sup> 'The Leopard's Spots', Produced by Hepworth Manufacturing Company for the Ministry of Information, 1918.

<sup>176</sup> G Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester, 1992), p.138.

public feeling had become so strong against persons of enemy origin that it was impossible to keep on an alien professor any longer.<sup>177</sup> Later, his son Fritz, working for the continental telegraphic agency is also dismissed on account of his German roots. Their local German social club, 'The Goethe Club', is raided by the police and shut down. During a conversation on the possibility of impending internment, the family hatch a plot to get to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Temple. Margaret switches with a family friend to become Freda Michel, the Swiss Governess of the Prime Minister's daughter.

In the second act, set in Sir Robert Temple's house, the Prime Minister is seen being taken through Metropolitan Police reports on enemy alien activity and the registration of aliens by the Chief Commissioner. The Prime Minister learns of 'subterranean propaganda' that had been created through the Goethe Club under the presidency of Doctor Gottfried Schiller and that the Home Office view the whole of the Schiller family as dangerous. Margaret is recognised by the Chief Commissioner and he alerts the Prime Minister to the alien in their midst. Sir Robert then confronts Margaret with this information and she eventually admits who she is. She is allowed to stay in the Prime Minister's service, on an oath to cut herself off from her family and friends.

The third act, set two months later, finds the Schillers of Soho Square plotting to kill the Prime Minister. Margaret is contacted and persuaded by her relatives to assist them in the murder of Sir Robert. The final act climaxes in Margaret's refusal to help her family, and she sacrifices herself by taking the bullet her younger brother Otto shoots in darkness intending to kill the Prime Minister.

A review of the play by the Gloucester Citizen notes:

There is a defence of the fealty of the naturalised parents' children, thousands of whom have given youth, blood, life for their British land of birth, which was received with the approval by the audience. There are many patriotic passages in the play, and an exposure of German traitors in our midst, who are depicted as plotting and talking hate.<sup>178</sup>

On the production's opening day, the *Daily Mirror* published an interview with Sir Hall Caine, who confirmed that Lloyd George would not be attending the first performance in London.<sup>179</sup> Lloyd George had written to Caine wishing it every success, but stated that the military situation made it impossible for the Prime Minister to attend. The military

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<sup>177</sup> H Caine, *The Prime Minister* (London, 1918), p.24.

<sup>178</sup> The Gloucester Citizen, "'The Prime Minister' at the Royalty Theatre", 3 April 1918.

<sup>179</sup> The Daily Mirror (London), "Mr Lloyd George unable to be present at today's new play", 30 March 1918.

situation referred to is the German spring offensive launched on 21 March 1918 and the battle for Amiens, which it fell heavily on the British Army to defend.

Cast members Miss Ethel Irving, Mr Wilfred Fletcher, who played the mad young German Otto Schiller, and Mr C M Hallard, playing the Prime Minister, are featured in *Daily Mirror* photographs on Saturday 6 April 1918.<sup>180</sup> The newspaper reported that Mr Hall Caine's play had been drawing large crowds to the Royalty Theatre. In November 1918, *The Prime Minister* transferred to the Winter Gardens, New Brighton, near Liverpool. It is interesting that the subject matter was still drawing audiences even after the armistices. It is also interesting because the police and Home Office officials are portrayed as in control and on top of the enemy alien situation. They are seen to be acting on intelligence and know which enemy aliens are of danger to the Prime Minister.

The signing of the Armistice did not see an end to enemy alien issue in the public consciousness. A letter to *The Yorkshire Post* from a Mr Fowler of Bradford, on 28 November 1918 shows that the enemy alien issue remained high on the election agenda.

May I suggest that the candidates in the forthcoming election should be asked the following questions re aliens:-

1. Are you in favour of continuing the policy of the late government, whereby pork butchers and waiters were interned, while the wealthy were left at liberty?
2. Are you in favour of allowing firms of enemy alien origin to continue trading under British names which they have adopted since the war in order to mislead possible customers as to their real names and their nationality?
3. Are you in favour of deporting the whole lot back to their own countries irrespective of wealth, position, or naturalisation? <sup>181</sup>

Lloyd George, during the 'Coupon election' of December 1918, used the enemy alien issue and anti-German feeling as a platform to win votes, but this was quickly seized upon by the public and turned into a call for vengeance. Roy Hattersley's comments on Lloyd George's election conduct: 'His sin was not so much making the speeches – which were never worse than exaggerations of what was right and possible – but his failure either to forbid or disown the expression of opinions which he knew represented the desire for

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<sup>180</sup> The Daily Mirror (London), "The Prime Minister" at the Royalty Theatre", 6 April 1918.

<sup>181</sup> The Yorkshire Post, "Enemy aliens and the peace", 30 November 1918.



punishment and revenge.’<sup>182</sup> Robert Winder sees the ‘Coupon election’ as the start of something more sinister, ‘Indeed, if the birth of a new party politics – more populist, less elitist, quicker to pander to the instincts of the man in the pub – was partly responsible for the chilling of the British attitude to foreigners, then the rise of the popular press was an equally strong force.’<sup>183</sup>

Throughout the war the issue of enemy aliens and the threat they posed was always emotive for the home front and press in Britain. This would boil over into calls for the Government to do more and on occasion direct action in the form of rioting during periods of setbacks on the Western Front for the British Army. During these periods the Government would review and strengthen enemy alien policy, but not just because it was merely bowing to press and public pressure. It was also being informed and directed by intelligence coming from the Secret Service Bureau, later MI5.

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<sup>182</sup> R Hattersley, *The great outside, David Lloyd George* (London, 2010), p.488.

<sup>183</sup> Winder, op. cit., p.205.

## **Conclusion**

**The illusory threat: enemy aliens in Britain during the Great War**

This thesis has set forth to open up the enemy alien and internment historical study by reinstating the intelligence dimension to the debate. By its very nature, the activity of MI5 during the Great War has been surrounded in mystery. This makes MI5's role and achievements easy to miss when writing about how enemy alien and internment policy developed. During a July 1918 debate on the Naturalization Bill in the House of Commons, Home Secretary Sir George Cave praised the work of MI5.

The work of the military intelligence department was admirably done. He has to refer to it constantly for help, advice, and information. The police worked closely with the military intelligence department; they helped each other; and he did not think there was in the world any system of intelligence better or so good as our own. That was the view of foreign countries also. From time to time foreign countries came to us for advice and information as to the work of our intelligence departments.<sup>1</sup>

However, the central role MI5 provided in enemy alien advice and information faded from memory after the war ended. This was compounded by the lack of archive research material. Much of the archive material relating to MI5's early activities and its structure was only released to the National Archives in 1997 and then added to by releases under the Freedom of Information Act since 2005.

Before this release of material, historians had an unbalanced view of events. An important part of the jigsaw in governmental decision-making was missing. It has allowed some historians to make sweeping statements filling the intelligence dimension void with simplistic assumptions. Such assertions have included that the British government's enemy alien policy was one of ethnic cleansing or that they were purely reacting to press and public pressure for an 'intern them all' stance. Bostridge argues: 'There was a sudden shift in the government's policy on internment on 20 October, when McKenna ordered the arrest of every German and Austrian of military age.'<sup>2</sup> He attributes this sudden shift to governmental reaction to the anti-German rioting that had taken place around Deptford in London a few days earlier in October 1914. In one sentence, the work of MI5 and sub-committees of the CID into the treatment of aliens in war is swept away as activities of no importance. A simple cause and effect relationship is applied by Bostridge because the intelligence dimension has been overlooked.

The anti-German riots experienced in October 1914, and after the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915, cannot purely be explained as press jingoism to enemy aliens. Gregory highlights:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times* (London), 20 July 1918.

<sup>2</sup> M Bostridge, *The Fateful Year: England 1914* (London, 2014), p.313.

There can be little doubt that the cumulative effect of the press reporting of German behaviour helped stoke up popular anger and that the editorial rhetoric had become more inclined to stress the innate depravity of the German character, but it is worth noting that the specific areas which rioted were generally those which would have had a lower rate of new-paper readership.<sup>3</sup>

There can be little doubt that the cumulative effort of press reporting of German behaviour helped stoke up popular anger, and that contributed to act against enemy aliens and their properties. However, hunger, economic hardships and personal anger for relatives killed in war were also motivations for the riots. As Gregory stresses, most of the riots around the country took place in working class districts. He also notes: ‘the lack of correlation between the main areas of rioting in 1915 and the areas of organised anti-alien sentiment in the last two years of the war.’<sup>4</sup> Gregory accuses Panayi of: ‘whilst overstating the centrality of specific inflammatory rhetoric, he is too quick to dismiss economic causality.’<sup>5</sup>

As for the concept of public pressure shifting the government’s position on enemy aliens to one of wholesale internment in May 1915, Panayi and Bostridge both neglect the early activities of the War and Home Offices. In September 1914, the Home Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of States for War, had agreed the wholesale internment: ‘subject to specified exceptions, all Germans of military age should be held as prisoners of war.’<sup>6</sup> The implementation faltered in October 1914 due to an immediate shortage of accommodation. Policy had not changed in May 1915. However, press and public pressure made sure the policy was fully implemented.

The enemy alien and internment question is an important factor contributing to the formation of Asquith’s coalition government in May 1915. Again, the move to coalition government was influenced by the writings of the press. Viscount Esher noted:

How can you expect the English people, governed by a lot of elderly politicians who have never thought about war at all, certainly to understand what a war such as this means? How can you expect such a government to take any line but that of least resistance? That is to say, to suffer themselves to be blown about by the daily blasts of the penny press.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2008). p.236.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.238.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.236.

<sup>6</sup> TNA: KV 1/66 Internment of Alien Enemies.

<sup>7</sup> Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge: Esher 2/14, Journals February – July 1915.

The least resistance for the government in May had been to implement policy recommended by the Secret Service Bureau on the outbreak of war, and removal of Haldane as Lord Chancellor for his perceived pro-German sympathies.

What is interesting is the reversal of the relationship between government and press by the time of the enemy alien and internment heat spike in July 1918. This appears to have been orchestrated and initiated by Lloyd George, who wanted to divert the home front from scandals and British Army set-back on the Western Front. Here Lloyd George is directly playing on the fears of the home front, as did the press throughout the war, when writing about enemy aliens. Gardner, writing on the science and politics of fear and why humans so often get risk wrong and shrug off greater threats suggests:

Part of the answer lies in self-interest. Fear sells. Fear makes money. The countless companies and consultants in the business of protecting the fearful from whatever they may know it only too well. The more fear, the better the sales.<sup>8</sup>

Sometimes it can be easy to forget that newspapers during the Great War were commercial institutions. They required stories that sold their newspapers and pushed up their circulation figures. The period of spy mania before the First World War had demonstrated that foreigners engaged in espionage sold newspapers. Why change a winning formula in wartime? Enemy alien stories and articles were easy to write and did not need hard facts to back them up. The newspapers became merchants of fear. As Gardner points out: 'It doesn't matter what the particular views are. When like-minded people get together and talk, their existing views tend to become more extreme.'<sup>9</sup> Finally, when newspaper readers pooled this information with their friends and family it fed the fear until people became: 'convinced that the problem is bigger and scarier than they had thought.'<sup>10</sup>

This is in complete contrast to MI5's work. The role of MI5 was to provide an intelligence assessment on threats to the domestic security on the home front. They were interested in the next big threat, not just peddling the same old threat to justify their existence. In the pre-war period, the CID found the enemy alien issue in wartime important enough to devote resources to come up with policy solutions. The birth of MI5, the unofficial register of aliens and the drafting of enemy alien legislation to enact in time of war shows that they were not driven by extensive press or public pressure. In fact, the reason for pursuing an unofficial register had been simply because the CID sub-

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<sup>8</sup> D Gardner, *Risk: The Science and Politics of Fear* (London, 2009), p.15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.136.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.137.

committee felt that there was no public appetite to get such legislation through parliament. Male enemy aliens of military age were singled out as a group posing a security threat, and MI5 was created with terms of reference to assess its potential. By the time war broke out, MI5 had assessed the potential threat of enemy aliens and recommended an internment and exemption model.

As the structure of MI5 from **its** birth through to its evolution through the Great War has demonstrated, the Bureau was at the centre of government thinking and policy development relating to enemy aliens and internment. The structure was agile and adaptive to meet the changing security threats within the United Kingdom. This had been demonstrated by the creation of sub-branches to meet the new challenges such as the special measures for supervision and control of Belgian refugees in October 1915, Counter Espionage (Branch E) in August 1915 and Pacifism and Russian Affairs in 1917. They document how the threat levels and priorities for mitigating activity move from enemy aliens, to Belgian refugees, to aliens on neutral passports entering the country, to German attempts to disrupt other parts of the British Empire, and finally labour strikes linked to Bolshevism. What is clear by the time Asquith announced 'wholesale internment' in May 1915 is that the potential threat posed by enemy aliens had already been mitigated.

As for the summer of 1918, Lloyd George needed favourable by-elections results, and the likes of William Joynson-Hicks, Pemberton Billing and The British Empire Union were always looking for excuses to raise their media profiles. Gardner would label these individuals as merchants of fear:

There are politicians who talk up threats, denounce their opponents as soft or incompetent, and promise to slay the wolf at the door just as soon as we do the sensible thing and elect them. There are bureaucrats plumping for bigger budgets. Government-sponsored scientists who know the rule is 'no problem, no funding'. And there are the activists and non-governmental organizations who know they're only as influential as their media profile is big and that the surest way to boost that profile is to tell the scary stories that draw reporters like vultures to corpses.<sup>11</sup>

The other merchant of fear category, 'bureaucrats plumping for bigger budgets' and 'no problem, no funding' could be applied to MI5 itself. However, this label is undeserved when considering enemy aliens and internment. They identified the threat level and then recommended actions and legislation to mitigate any of the associated risks. Once the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.16.

enemy alien threat level had been reduced, MI5 used its intelligence data to assess new security risks.

The impact of the enemy alien and internment issue ran right to the centre of government. Politicians and civil servants in government had personal connections and interest in the issue. They were not just pontificating from ivory towers, but fed credible intelligence reports from MI5. Lord Hankey's personal connection happened on returning to his country house in September 1914. There he found a German residing in his servant's quarters:

On investigation I found that he had been in my own kitchen and that the domestic staff were permeated with a German version of recent events! I at once communicated with the police authorities, and the man was arrested; but whether he was sent home to Germany or interned I never heard.<sup>12</sup>

The Prime Minister was motivated enough to visit two internment camps in the space of a week. His first visit, to Frimley camp at the end of October 1914, had 4,500 male prisoners, of which half were civilian internees. Asquith noted in a letter to Venetia Stanley:

They were a rotten looking lot – waiters, hairdressers & the scum of Whitechapel & the East End with a sprinkling of doctors, professors, & educated men. We walked about among them & talked to them; a sad & sorry experience. They are going to be transferred to ships, and their most urgent need is to be sorted & classified.<sup>13</sup>

In his second visit, to the Newbury camp, at the beginning of November, Asquith was accompanied by McKenna, then Home Secretary.

We went yesterday afternoon to see another camp of German prisoners at Newbury... The civilians were much better assorted than at Frimley last week – the men of education & 'culture' not more than 4 or 5 in a tent. But I came across lots of cases which it was cruel & criminal to have treated as 'interned'; and I hope McKenna will effect a large clearance in the course of the next week. I loathe the excesses of the spy-fever.<sup>14</sup>

Asquith here references directly to the internment exemption policy that had been recommended by MI5, where those enemy aliens deemed not to pose a threat would be released from internment, but still subject to the Aliens Restriction Act. This is another

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<sup>12</sup> Hankey, *op. cit.*, p.167.

<sup>13</sup> Brock, *op cit.*, p.286.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.302.

example of the work and recommendations of MI5 being respected and influential in government circles.

Panayi accuses the British government of practising ethnic cleansing in relation to its record on enemy aliens and internment.<sup>15</sup> However, there are no records that state that this was a deliberate aim of the British Government. This is hardly surprising given that concepts of ethnic cleansing and genocide are post facto ‘historization’ and did not exist during the First World War. In fact, a report to the Reconstruction Committee considering repatriation at the end of the war for interned enemy aliens noted:

The result of the offer made in January 1917, to repatriate the men over 45 who wished to return to their native country, was that of approximately 4,200 men eligible for repatriation, only 1,800, or say, 43 per cent., applied to be allowed to remain here. But it would not be safe to take these figures as a guide to the proportion of the total numbers of the interned who will wish to remain here.<sup>16</sup>

Can internment and repatriation in Britain really be attributed, as Panayi suggests to a ‘policy of ethnic cleansing which eliminated the German community’ when the policy included the right of appeal and exemption?<sup>17</sup> The statistics collected in 1918 suggest that nearly sixty percent of those earmarked for repatriation wished to return their country of origin. When the Reconstruction Committee in January 1918 recommended that at the end of war: ‘interned civilian prisoners of war should be repatriated en masse from the camps’ they included an appeals mechanism for individuals wanting to remain in the United Kingdom.<sup>18</sup> The report added: ‘In the cases where leave to remain is given to interned persons we do not anticipate that any special measures will be necessary for their absorption in the civil population.’<sup>19</sup>

Hiley, in his 2010 ‘Re-entering the List’ paper, states:

The truth is that in August 1914 Kell was running what was primarily a counter-sabotage unit, whose operations were based on a fantasy. It was believed that the German General Staff was planning to start hostilities by landing an army of up to 70,000 men on the British coast, and winning the war with a forced march on London.<sup>20</sup>

He goes so far as to suggest that the suspected spies arrest announcement to the House of Commons was a reaction to the failure of German sabotage activity to materialise around

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<sup>15</sup> Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, p.305.

<sup>16</sup> TNA: KV 1/67 Report of the Aliens Committee, Part1 Repatriation of enemy aliens, 25 January 1918.

<sup>17</sup> Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, p.305.

<sup>18</sup> TNA: KV 1/67 Report of the Aliens Committee, Part1 Repatriation of enemy aliens, 25 January 1918.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Hiley, *Re-entering the List: MI5's Authorized History and the August 1914 Arrests*, p.441.



Britain. However, a report from the Secret Service Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Curzon, in February 1919, concluded:<sup>21</sup>

The counter-espionage branch, working in close co-operation with the Home Office, had succeeded in getting into touch with the greater number, if not all, the German agents in this country, with the satisfactory result that on the outbreak of war all suspects were arrested, and the German spy organisation was broken up. The fact that no act of sabotage was committed by German agents during the first critical months of the war bears good testimony to the value of this work.<sup>22</sup>

Hiley forgets that the war was brought to the British home front, not through a German invasion force, but through naval shelling of the East Coast and Zeppelin bombing raids across Britain. Examples of German activity, in trying to supply the Irish rebels with guns and ammunition for the 1916 Easter rising and acts of sabotage on the east coast of America in 1915, showed that the German government was capable of employing acts of sabotage. He also fails to recognise that during the Great War spying and sabotage were seen as interconnected entity within the Bureau.

The Secret Service Commitment report also concluded:

Colonel Kell's branch experienced a similar expansion and undertook a number of new duties according as the circumstances of the War required. Apart from its main function in tracing and watching spies, good work has been done in conjunction with the Home Office in dealing with all questions relating to aliens and suspects in this country, particularly in regard to the entry and departure of persons to and from British ports.<sup>23</sup>

The committee had been appointed by the War Cabinet in January 1919 with the objective of understanding:

- (a) What is being done at present by the Secret Service Branches of the several departments.
- (b) How this work can be best co-ordinated with a view to the necessary action being taken with the utmost promptitude.<sup>24</sup>

Driving the review had been a paper from Walter Long at the Admiralty to the War Cabinet.<sup>25</sup> Long raised concerns around bolstering the civilian side of the secret service in the context of flushing out persons engaged in revolutionary or anarchical movements

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<sup>21</sup> The committee included Mr. W. Long or Lord Lytton (Admiralty), Mr Shortt (Home Office) Lord Peel (War Office) and Mr Macpherson (Irish Office).

<sup>22</sup> TNA: CAB 24/76 Report of the Secret Service Committee, February 1919.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> TNA: CAB 24/73 The Secret Service, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1919.

within Britain. Bolshevism had become the new illusory threat in Britain for successive governments to prove or disprove.

In the months after the armistice, MI5 suffered cuts in staff and budgets. Its budget shrunk from £100,000 to £35,000 a year and the number of staff decreased from 844 to 151 by 1920.<sup>26</sup> By 1925 Kell found himself with just thirty-five staff, and numbers continued to decline until 1934. Kell struggled to justify the continuation and benefits of MI5 in a post-war world. This was compounded by Basil Thomson's power play and claims that Scotland Yard's 'Special Branch' had been at the centre of counter-espionage during the war. Thomson was rewarded with the Secret Service Commitment recommending to the War Cabinet that he be made the Director of Intelligence of a new civil Secret Service Department and: 'be responsible for the collection and dissemination of all intelligence.'<sup>27</sup>

By 1920, the CID was already learning lessons from the Great War and applying them through the standing sub-committee on the coordination of departmental action on the outbreak of war. At its eighth meeting the members appointed a sub-committee to consider the question of the treatment of aliens in time of war. The terms of reference for the newly appointed committee included researching recommendation on the internment, expulsion or control of enemy aliens and to form a position on the rights of enemy aliens to defend themselves in the law courts.<sup>28</sup>

The sub-committee included Kell from the War Office, and representatives from the Admiralty and Air Ministry. It was chaired by John Pedder, principle assistant secretary at the Home Office, and its recommendations were reported in March 1923. Their recommendations were based extensively on what they had learned in the Great War and how policy would sit with public sentiment:

In a war of similar dimensions and character to that of the Great War it is to be expected that there will be a popular demand for the internment of enemies, but internment of the civilian alien enemies is an uneconomical procedure, and it should be restricted to the narrowest limits consistent with public safety and public sentiment. It has to be remembered that internment involves great hardship to the wives (especially if British-born) and families of the interned men. If the general principle of internment of male alien enemies is adopted, it will be necessary to establish machinery by which exemption may be granted to all those who can be

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p.117.

<sup>27</sup> TNA: CAB 23/15 War Cabinet, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1919.

<sup>28</sup> TNA: KV 4/361 UK policy on the management of refugees, internees and other suspects in time of war or emergency (1918-1931). [Meeting held on the 11 February 1920].

left at large without risk to the national interests. It is not suggested that female alien enemies should be interned as prisoners of war.<sup>29</sup>

It is clear that the procedure of internment as a measure was viewed uneconomical and should only be applied in a first instance to those who posed the great risks.

By 1923, it is also clear that the CID were already working on a new war book in preparation for the next possible conflicts. Part I, Chapter IX, Section 2 of the war book was devoted to the internment of enemy subjects (civilians) in time of war.<sup>30</sup> Colonel Kell was approached by the CID to undertake further research on internment. His brief was to make recommendations in the selection and preparation of the sites for the internment of male enemy aliens on the outbreak of war. By November, the sub-committee had agreed implementation strategies with the War Office in the event of conflict. They were responsible for the provision and guarding of internment camps, rations provided to internees and general administration regarding internment policy. Then, in 1924, detailed schedules were produced showing the duties and responsibilities of the various government departments concerned with the control of aliens in time of war. This included planning for the first 5,000 internees, the locations of each internment camp and their bed capacity, and spreadsheets detailing the numbers of staff to run and troops to guard the camps. These are implementation strategies that had been missing in pre Great War planning when only the policy and legislation for internment had been thought about in any great detail.

Changes to the Geneva Convention in 1929 on the treatment of prisoners of war made no reference or consideration to the status of civilian internees in wartime. Therefore the CID recommended that enemy aliens received the same treatment as military prisoners of war.

The council considers, however, that on General grounds of policy and to avoid the danger of reprisals leading to unnecessary hardship to the British citizens who may have been interned in enemy countries, the conditions of civilian internees should not be worse off than those of prisoners of war.<sup>31</sup>

This included an entitlement to free postage.

What is also interesting about the compilation of the war book in 1924 is the CID's briefing on possible candidates of Britain's next aggressor. In relation to the treatment of aliens in war time, the Admiralty, Air Ministry and War Office were asked to provide

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. [Meeting held on the 29 March 1923].

<sup>30</sup> TNA: KV 4/362 General policy re internment of enemy aliens in war 1918-1943.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

recommendations on approved ports, special defence areas and alien protected areas linked to three scenarios. These 'hypothetical cases' were war with; '(a) France, (b) Japan and (c) Germany'.<sup>32</sup>

As it became clearer in the 1930s that Germany was likely to be the next aggressor, cracks started to appear between the Home Office and War Office on the robustness of enemy alien policy in war time. By 1938 C.B. McAlpine, in charge of the Aliens Department at the Home Office, was questioning MI5 policy recommendation that internment should be restricted to individuals considered to be dangerous. McAlpine comments in a memorandum: 'Colonel Holt-Wilson tells us that in the considered view of MI5 interment by classes or age, as carried out in the last war, is unnecessary on security grounds, and inflicts great hardship on innocent people.'<sup>33</sup> The challenge to MI5's thinking was driven by the numbers of German, Austrian and Italian refugees fleeing to Britain. These refugees, estimated to be a group of approximately 33,000 males were still technically enemy aliens, even if in some cases they had been stripped of their nationality by the German government and were 'stateless aliens'. McAlpine argued that public pressure in wartime could force the internment of this refugee group for their own security and asked MI5 to make plans for this eventuality.

It seems highly probable that public opinion would protest against enemy aliens being allowed to go about in freedom and would demand comprehensive measures of internment: and it is further to be expected that in some districts at least, but especially those which have been subject to a aerial attack, enemy aliens would be the subject of hostile demonstrations and might have to be interned for their own protection. Even if, therefore, it is decided that the immediate needs on the outbreak of war would be met by the MI5 proposal, it still seems desirable to consider the problem of general internment of enemy aliens.<sup>34</sup>

MI5 had planned for 20 internment camps to accommodate 790 class A and 4,700 class B male enemy aliens.<sup>35</sup> Their estimate in February 1939 of dangerous enemy aliens for internment in the event of an outbreak of hostilities stood at 2,438. Even with the spare capacity the Home Office considered: 'it is essential that plans should be formulated without delay with a view to implementing a decision to carry out general interment of

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. [Letter dated 31 December 1924 from Claude Hermon Hodge, Secretary to the Home Defence Committee].

<sup>33</sup> TNA: KV 4/364 General policy on internment of enemy aliens in war 1918-1943

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 'Class A' enemy aliens consisted of those who hold or have held commissions or rank as officers in the forces of an enemy state, or official positions in the government service of an enemy state of status equivalent to that of an officer, and also internees as may be approved by chief officers of police to be of good social and financial status and prepared to sign an undertaking to pay 4s 5d per day for messing in a class A camp.

men of military age, which might well be forced upon his majesty's government in the early stages of a War.'<sup>36</sup> With this in mind, plans were put in place to use the Isle of Man to accommodate the refugees if it became necessary.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, individuals from MI5's dangerous enemy aliens list were arrested and interned. The remaining enemy aliens and refugees, approximately 73,400 appeared before tribunals. Out of this group 64,000 were left entirely free with 55,500 being classified as 'refugees from Nazi oppression'.<sup>37</sup>

The Home Office's prediction of change in policy to wholesale internment of enemy aliens as a precautionary measure started in May 1940. This coincided with the appointment of Winston Churchill as Prime Minister and the German invasion of France through Belgium and Holland. A knock-on effect of the change in policy for the Isle of Man, with an influx of 10,000 internees, was a tourist boom. In a letter from Mr D'Egville at the government office on the Isle of Man to MI5, he explained:

Don't worry about my losing my nerve with the Germans. Of all the ugly lot I ever saw, they take the bun. Their arrival has, however, saved the place, as they have plenty of money and the shops are full. Shops that were closed are re-opening. Ice cream has touched a record.<sup>38</sup>

The change in policy saw the internment of 27,200 men and women around Britain and the Empire. In the deportation process of 5,000 civilian enemy aliens to other parts of the Empire, some 650 drowned aboard ships sunk by the German navy.<sup>39</sup> Then, from July 1940, the rules were relaxed and category 'C' internees were able to apply for release. The first 1,000 internees allowed to return back to the mainland were released in August 1940. By the end of 1940, nearly 10,000 internees had been released in Britain.<sup>40</sup> The releases continued into 1941 at a rate of approximately 1,000 internees a month.

If we move forward to the beginning of the twenty-First Century, the same debate is taking place, albeit with a different group of people seen as the threat. What has changed is the focus of the fear, from the German immigrant population at the time of the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> F Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens* (London, 1988), p.37.

<sup>38</sup> TNA: KV 4/366 General policy on internment of enemy aliens in war 1918-1943.

<sup>39</sup> P & L Gillman, *Collar the Lot! How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees* (London, 1980), p.225.

<sup>40</sup> Gillman, op. cit., p.257.

Great War to Al Qaida sleeper cells during the war on terror and UK individual ‘Jihadists’ trying to join Syrian terrorism training camps and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in 2015. It is also difficult not to see parallels between German internees in Britain and United States war on terror internees of CAMP X-RAY, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in 2002. David Cole, Professor of Law, at Georgetown University, commenting on the internees of Camp X Ray, said:

Under the preventive paradigm, instead of holding people accountable for what you can prove that they have done in the past, you lock them up based on what you think or speculate they might do in the future. And how—how can a person who’s locked up based on what you think they might do in the future disprove your speculation? It’s impossible, and so what ends up happening is the government short-circuits all the processes that are designed to distinguish the innocent from the guilty because they simply don’t fit this mode of locking people up for what they might do in the future.<sup>41</sup>

If the success of MI5 in the Great War was to be based upon the numbers of spies arrested and successfully charged with espionage, their achievements would be ranked as poor.

In 1916, only five persons were arrested and tried on charges of espionage. It is apparently a paradox, but it is none the less true, and a most important truth, that the efficiency of a counter espionage service is not measured only or chiefly by the numbers of spies caught by it. For such a service if it catches no spies at all, may in fact perform the most admirable work by hampering the enemy’s intelligence service, and causing it to lose money, labour, and, most precious of all, time, in overcoming the obstacles placed in its way.<sup>42</sup>

Exactly because MI5, with the support of other government departments, had shut the door to the German intelligence services exploiting enemy aliens in Britain, it had to find other means of disrupting the British war effort in other parts of the Empire.

By adding the intelligence dimension back into the narrative, some balance is restored and government decision-making can be viewed in a wider context. Yet the issue of enemy aliens was always more than just a security threat to the government; it was also a numbers game.

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<sup>41</sup> David Cole, interview by A Curtis, ‘The Power of Nightmares: The Shadows in the Cave,’ *BBC Documentary Film* (BBC2, 3 November 2004).

<sup>42</sup> TNA: KV 1/36 ‘F’ Branch report, preventive legislation and administration, third war period.

The British Government was quite aware that in case it released the entire German civilian population in return for the release of the comparatively small number of British subjects held in Germany, the effect would be to strengthen the military power of Germany out of all proportion to the military benefit which Great Britain herself would have derived from repatriation of her own civilians held in Germany.<sup>43</sup>

By 1916, MI5 and the government knew that legislation and a policy of internment with exemption meant that enemy aliens were no longer a threat. However, for the press and public the illusory threat continued to keep them awake at night long after the war ended.

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<sup>43</sup> J Garner, 'Treatment of Enemy Aliens' *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol.12, No.1 (January 1918), pp. 27-55.

## **Appendix One**

### **Punch Magazine Enemy Alien and Internment Content Heat Map 1914-1918**



Numbers of *Punch* enemy alien and internment articles and cartoons by month during the Great War.

		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914	Total Articles							85	60	99	78	83	98
	Alien Articles							1	5	6	7	4	4
	Total cartoons							82	53	70	56	58	69
	Alien cartoons							1	4	9	6	4	5
1915	Total Articles	80	83	107	75	68	76	69	68	115	96	89	87
	Alien Articles	1	5	2	3	9	2	5	0	0	1	0	0
	Total cartoons	56	60	73	60	61	75	88	56	74	60	60	71
	Alien cartoons	5	5	7	4	6	4	0	1	0	2	0	0
1916	Total Articles	80	77	85	72	93	67	69	87	69	70	88	68
	Alien Articles	0	1	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	0
	Total cartoons	57	53	66	55	66	51	78	67	83	58	68	50
	Alien cartoons	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	0
1917	Total Articles	90	71	64	69	79	57	63	100	75	91	70	63
	Alien Articles	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Total cartoons	66	54	79	55	70	53	56	74	50	66	50	51
	Alien cartoons	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1918	Total Articles	78	69	68	66	84	61	81	72	75	84	64	58
	Alien Articles	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	3	0	1	1	0
	Total cartoons	66	54	52	51	65	51	67	53	52	66	53	49
	Alien cartoons	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

These are compared against the number of articles and cartoons in *Punch* Magazine each month.

Percentage of *Punch* enemy alien and internment articles and cartoons by month during the Great War

		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914	Alien Articles							1.2%	8.3%	6.1%	9.0%	4.8%	4.1%
	Alien Cartoons							1.2%	7.5%	12.8%	10.8%	6.9%	7.2%
1915	Alien Articles	1.3%	6.0%	1.9%	4.0%	13.2%	2.6%	7.3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
	Alien Cartoons	8.9%	8.3%	9.6%	6.7%	9.8%	5.3%	0%	1.8%	0%	3.3%	0%	0%
1916	Alien Articles	0%	1.3%	3.5%	0%	1.1%	0%	2.9%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%	2.3%	0%
	Alien Cartoons	0%	0%	0%	1.8%	0%	0%	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	1.7%	1.5%	0%
1917	Alien Articles	0%	0%	1.6%	1.5%	1.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.1%	1.4%	0%
	Alien Cartoons	0%	0%	0%	1.8%	0%	1.9%	1.8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1918	Alien Articles	0%	0%	0%	1.5%	0%	1.6%	4.9%	4.2%	0%	1.2%	1.6%	0%
	Alien Cartoons	0%	0%	0%	2.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Created by counting the number of enemy alien and internment articles and cartoons against the total number of articles and cartoons in each weekly *Punch* magazine issue.

Average percentage of *Punch* enemy alien and internment content by month during the Great War.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914							1.2%	8.0%	8.9%	9.7%	5.7%	5.4%
1915	4.4%	7.0%	5.0%	5.2%	11.6%	4.0%	3.2%	0.8%	0%	1.9%	0%	0%
1916	0%	0.8%	2.0%	0.8%	0.6%	0%	2.7%	1.9%	2.0%	1.6%	1.9%	0%
1917	0%	0%	0.7%	1.6%	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	0%	0%	0.6%	0.8%	0%
1918	0%	0%	0%	1.7%	0%	0.9%	2.7%	2.4%	0%	0.7%	0.9%	0%

KEY	0-2%	3-5%	6-8%	9-11%	12+%
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

*Punch* enemy alien and interment content heat map 1914 to 1918.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914							VL	M	H	H	M	M
1915	L	M	L	M	VH	L	L	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL
1916	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	L	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL
1917	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL
1918	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	L	L	VL	VL	VL	VL

KEY	0-2%	3-5%	6-8%	9-11%	12+%
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

## **Appendix Two**

### **The Daily Mirror Enemy Alien and Internment Articles Heat Map, 1914-1918**

*Daily Mirror*: number of enemy alien and internment articles per issue, August 1914 to July 1915.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
August 1914		A									2						1	2		2	1					1					1
September 1914		I	1		1	A					1				1			1					1		1						
October 1914	2	1		A			1		2							1			1	2	2	1	2	4		2	1		3	3	1
November 1914	A				2	1	1		1	2		2	1				2	1	1				2	2	1		1	1		3	2
December 1914	I																														
January 1915	2	2			1	A		2		1	1				1			1	1									1		2	
February 1915			A	2	1	1	1		1						1					1											
March 1915			I																												
April 1915				1	1		A																								
May 1915	1	1																													
June 1915			I																												
July 1915				1	1		I																								

*Daily Mirror*: Number of enemy alien and internment articles per issue, August 1915 to July 1916.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
August 1915	A															1															
September 1915	I		1		1	A			1																						
October 1915			1	1	I		1																								
November 1915																															
December 1915				1	A																										
January 1916		A	3																												
February 1916	1	I						2		1	1	1	1	1	2				1												
March 1916			1	2	I																										
April 1916																															
May 1916			1	1			A	1	1																						
June 1916	2			1	1		I			1	1	1				1															
July 1916																															

*Daily Mirror*: number of enemy alien and internment articles per issue, August 1916 to July 1917.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
August 1916			1	1		A																									
			2			I	1		1														1		1					2	1
September 1916		1	A	1							1	1																			
	2	2	I				2					1	1	1	1				2	1		1	1		1	1					
October 1916	A																	1		1			1								
	I		3	1	2	1			1		2	1				1			1	1	1		2		2	1	1				1
November 1916						A						1			1						1										
				1	I									1				1			2	1	1	2				1	1		
December 1916		1	A										1																		
			I	1		1													2								1	1			
January 1917		1				1				1								1		1					1	1					
		1	1	1			A				1					1		1		1		2	1	1							
February 1917				A					2					1		1					1							1			
		2	I	1	1	1	1		1	1			2	1		1	1						1					1			
March 1917				A				1	1	1							1														
		1	I				2		1	2					2	1	1												1		
April 1917	A			1						1	1				1				1	1					1	1	1				
	I																														
May 1917						A								1	1								1					1	1		
						I		1	1		1			1		2			1										1		1
June 1917			A		1	1						1	1	1	1	1			1		3								1		
		1	I																1			2			1		1				
July 1917	A			1			1		2						1	1			1					1		1	1				
	I			1		1	1			1		1	2			1								1				3			1

*Daily Mirror* number of enemy alien and internment articles per issue, August 1917 to July 1918.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
August 1917			1		A		1			1	1													1			1				
			5		I						1			2	1	1				1	1				2				1	1	
September 1917	1	A		1		2		1		1	1														1		1		1		
	2	I	2	3		1	1	1				1			3			1	1					1			1	1	1		
October 1917	1	1					A	1	1			1						1		1				1							
	1						I	2	1	2	1	1					1	3	2	1				1	1	1			1	2	
November 1917				A								3	1		1	2				1			3							1	
			3	I			2					2				1				1						1				1	1
December 1917	1	A												1				1	1										1		
		I		1	1					1				2	3				1	3							1	1	1		
January 1918						A						1				2															1
			2	2		I	1	2		1	1	1		4	1	3										2				1	
February 1918		1	A	1												1															
			I					1	1							1	1										1				
March 1918	3		A									1						1		1	1	1				2		1			
		1	I			1						1		2					1	3			1					1	1	1	
April 1918						A						1								1	1									2	
	1	1	2	2	1		I		1				1			1	1	1												1	1
May 1918					A											1	1	1					1					1	2		
					I	1		1					1														1	1	1	1	1
June 1918	A		1		1	1						1					1	2		1	2	1		2	2	1		1	1		
	I			1	1	1	2			2			1	1				2		2	1	1		3	1			1	1		
July 1918	2	1	5	1	1		A	4	2	1		5	4		2	2	1	1	1	1	1			2	1	2				1	
	5		3	1	1	1	I	1	1	1		3			1	1	1	1	1	1			1	2		2	1	3			

*Daily Mirror*: number of enemy alien and internment articles per issue, August 1918 to November 1918.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
August 1918				A		2						1					1		2		1					1	2	1	1		
		1		I	1	1						1					2			1	1					2	1	1			
September 1918	A				1					1		3	1							1	1										
	I						1	1	2			2					2							1		1					
October 1918	1					A		1							1				1					1							1
			1			I	1	1	2	1	1			1		1									1					1	
November 1918			A											1						2				1		1			1	1	
		1	I	1	1	1		1	2					1	2	1		2	1	4			2	3		4			3		1
December 1918	A																														
	I																														

*Daily Mirror*: number of enemy alien and internment articles per month August 1914 to November 1918.

YEAR	January		February		March		April		May		June		July		August		September		October		November		December	
	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I	A	I
1914															10	3	7	5	29	14	21	0	13	13
1915	8	8	3	6	5	11	4	9	43	29	11	7	4	13	3	8	15	19	2	4	7	5	4	13
1916	13	12	8	16	5	11	8	15	5	14	15	16	10	21	3	9	4	17	3	22	3	11	4	6
1917	7	12	6	14	4	11	9	0	5	9	12	8	10	14	7	16	10	21	10	21	13	12	6	15
1918	5	23	6	3	12	14	8	14	8	14	17	21	43	31	12	12	12	10	7	12	7	31		

*Daily Mirror*: total number of enemy alien and internment articles per month August 1914 to November 1918.

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1914								13	12	43	21	26
1915	16	9	16	13	72	18	17	11	34	6	12	17
1916	25	24	16	23	19	31	31	12	21	25	14	10
1917	19	20	15	9	14	20	24	23	31	31	25	21
1918	28	9	26	22	22	38	74	24	22	19	38	

*Daily Mirror* Enemy Alien and Internment Articles Heat Map, 1914-1918.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914								VL	VL	M	L	L
1915	VL	VL	VL	VL	VH	L	L	VL	M	VL	VL	L
1916	L	L	VL	VL	L	L	L	VL	L	L	VL	VL
1917	L	L	VL	VL	VL	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
1918	L	VL	L	L	L	M	VH	L	L	L	M	

KEY	0-16	17-32	33-48	49-64	65-80
Heat	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high



## **Appendix Three**

### **Parliamentary Enemy Alien and Internment Debate Heat Map, 1914-1918**

## Numbers of debates on enemy alien and internment in the House of Lords and House of Commons during the Great War.

		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914	Internment						0	0	1	2	Recess	95	Recess
	Alien						1	34	52	64	Recess	179	Recess
1915	Internment	5	124	108	55	98	77	65	Recess	33	33	1	14
	Alien	31	145	132	35	117	93	60	Recess	16	14	0	43
1916	Internment	20	30	70	0	73	109	227	122	Recess	131	102	51
	Alien	31	23	66	0	41	79	85	79	Recess	69	90	26
1917	Internment	Recess	88	74	44	Recess	76	51	1	Recess	14	60	3
	Alien	Recess	57	50	29	Recess	92	24	3	Recess	0	35	0
1918	Internment	82	56	75	56	65	116	210	58	Recess	66	75	Recess
	Alien	64	55	84	78	37	62	339	97	Recess	36	67	Recess

Using the records of Hansard Parliamentary Debates, the official report of proceedings of the House of Commons and the House Lords, it is possible to map the frequency of debates that include alien enemy or internment within them through the Great War. The key word searches were for “internment”, “interned” and “alien”. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vols 64 to 110 and Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vols 17 to 32. [Hansard.millbanksystems.com](http://Hansard.millbanksystems.com)

## Parliamentary Enemy Alien and Internment Debate Heat Map, 1914-1918.

	Key	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914	Intern							VL	VL	VL	R	L	R
	Alien							VL	L	L	R	H	R
1915	Intern	VL	M	M	L	L	L	L	R	VL	VL	VL	VL
	Alien	VL	M	M	VL	M	L	L	R	VL	VL	VL	VL
1916	Intern	VL	VL	L	VL	L	M	VH	M	R	M	M	L
	Alien	VL	VL	L	VL	VL	L	L	L	R	L	L	VL
1917	Intern	R	L	L	VL	R	L	L	VL	R	VL	VL	VL
	Alien	R	L	L	VL	R	L	L	VL	R	VL	VL	VL
1918	Intern	L	L	L	L	VL	L	VH	L	R	VL	VL	R
	Alien	L	L	L	L	VL	L	VH	L	R	VL	L	R

KEY	0-49	50-99	100-149	150-199	200 +
Recess	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high

# Parliamentary Enemy Alien and Internment Debate Heat Map, 1914-1918.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1914							VL	L	L	R	H	R
1915	VL	M	M	L	M	L	L	R	VL	VL	VL	VL
1916	VL	VL	L	VL	L	M	VH	M	R	M	M	L
1917	R	L	L	VL	R	L	L	VL	R	VL	VL	VL
1918	L	L	L	L	VL	L	VH	L	R	VL	L	R

KEY	0-49	50-99	100-149	150-199	200 +
Recess	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high

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